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YOUR NEIGHBOR AND YOU

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BY

REV. EDWARD F. GARESCHÉ, S.J.

Author of "Your Soul's Salvation,"
"Your Interests Eternal," etc.

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✠JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY,

Archbishop of New York

NEW YORK, September 3, 1918.

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TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
VESSEL OF HONOR

PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY. APR 2 2 1919

PREFACE

THESE articles have for the most part appeared in the pages of the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*. Some have been published in *America*, *The Sacred Heart Review*, *The Magnificat*, *Extension*, *Men and Women*, and the *Rosary*. Though written at different times, they group themselves—and by design—around one central theme, for they deal with those two greatest of all realities after God Himself, to wit, your neighbor and you.

Their appeal is meant to be a wide one; indeed, the thoughts they dwell on are for all earnest and sincere Catholic men and women. Desires often come to all of us to rise to nobler and better ways of living, to make more of our lives both for our neighbor and ourselves. But when, and where, and how to begin our efforts often seems difficult and obscure. For Religious, there are many manuals of holy living, for the layman there are comparatively few; fewer still deal with life as it is lived at our present time. These

papers are only a partial and feeble effort to supply this want and to suggest to Catholics some at least of the everyday and easy ways in which they may aid both themselves and their fellow-men.

Certain questions and issues otherwise very timely and important—such as political activity, the wide fields of social work, and all the rest—are only hinted at in passing. In a larger and more pretentious book they would be indispensable, but their absence will readily be pardoned here.

Finally, if something has been sacrificed to emphasis, to interest, and clearness; if there is a dwelling on the obvious with many repetitions, and a touch of old-fashioned familiarity toward the gentle Reader, all these things will be condoned, we trust, in view of the humble and practical purpose of this little book. It was written (a labor of love) in the between-whiles of busy days; and it is meant to be read in like manner, little by little, in quiet moments, or in your weary or your leisure hours.

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IN A LITTLE WHILE

At the lake of the Two Mountains in Canada there stands a Trappist monastery. It is built in the solemn company of the hills, and the patient monks have made a wild valley blossom with their toil. All day long one may see them, passing to and fro in silent industry, tilling the fields, watching the kine, working in their great dairy, and all with never a word to beguile the long and weary hours.

It seems a hard life, indeed, this of the Trappists of Oka. They rise at two in the morning, and spend a long time before the dawn kneeling at their uncomfortable stalls, chanting holy psalmody, or bending in silent prayer. Then, when the morning comes, after Mass and Office are over, they go into the fields or the barns to take up their monotonous round of toil.

Some of them follow the herds to pasture, some break the stony ground, some go to the great dairies, some bestir themselves to sweep the long corridors of the monastery, but all

in silence and prayer. In silence they take their frugal meal, late in the day; in silence they file into the chapel again to end their day as they began, in chanting the holy Office. So at the hour of eight they go to rest, after what would seem to most men an intolerable round of prayer and work and prayer.

What keeps them steadfast in their austere vocation? What thought do you suppose cheers and carries them on through all the slow and toilsome hours?

You may easily guess whence some of their steadiness and courage comes, if you will read the motto that is written large over their "Order of the Day" which hangs beside the door. It is a brief and pithy saying, simple and stern as their own lives. In their French language it reads, *"Bientôt l' Eternité!"*—"A Little While and it will be Eternity!"

A little while! That is the secret of their cheerfulness, their calm, their steadfast perseverance. They are saying, each one in his heart: "It will be only a little while. A little while and the weary days will all be over; a little while and the tired limbs will

be at rest. Soon the longest task will be accomplished, the weariest labor ended. Soon, very soon, it will be eternity."

No wonder that they labor well, these monks of Oka. No wonder that they love their bare cells, their empty corridors, their long night-watches and their days of heat and toil. They are thinking hour after hour: "A little while and it will be eternity." The brightness of eternal splendor falls from afar upon their faces. Their souls are filled with the calm and sweetness of the great joys to come.

Would not any one rejoice, in whatever toilsome or dreary hour, if he realized and knew that in a little while he would be plunged into unending and unfathomable joy and peace? Can any cloud make them gloomy, when the calm, white glory of Heaven bursts through its shadow, shining so very near? A moment—a few brief days—some fleeting years, and it will all be over; the stiffening toil, the wearing penance, the tears of contrition, and the weariness of hope deferred. In a little while it will be eternity. The body of this death will fall from their

yearning spirit. The dull heaviness of life, its cares and fears, will be changed as in a twinkling into the lightness and springing joy of life eternal. The face of God, kind, merciful and loving, will shine out from the shadows. They will see Him face to face and know Him even as they are known. And these joys, this peace, this glory, all the brightness and delight will know no ending. As long as God is God, as truth is truth, as love is love, so long shall their joys go on unceasing, for it will be eternity.

This is, then, a full and pithy saying, is it not, which some wise hand has written by the doorway of the house of Oka? And we, too, have much to learn from the inspiring legend. Is it not as true for us as it is for them? "A little while and it will be eternity." The dawn of that everlasting day is not very far beyond any man's horizon. It lies but just before the portals of our life. A little while, for us all, and it will be eternity!

Say so to your weary soul, when it begins to flag and falter on the narrow path of well-doing, when you are disposed to grow tired of trying to be good and charitable and pure,

and faithful to your neighbor and your God, when you are sorely tempted, as all of us are at times, to turn from the narrow path on to the broad and easy highway of the world.

A little while, O my soul, and it will be eternity. The world will fade away, your flesh and its weariness will fall from you forever. Do not weary, nor fret, nor turn like a coward from the struggle. Bear up; fight on; be of good heart; it is not for long. What a motive, what an encouragement to do more and more for God! A little while! The time is short, the work momentous, the days are fleeting, the hour of a man's death is always near. A little while, and in that little while we must gather whatever store of merit, grace, or glory is to be ours for all the ages of the life to come. We must live forever on the heavenly gold which we may only gather now. After that little while, the fountains of merit and glory are sealed up forever. An act of love, of mercy, of purity, of alms-giving, of penance—one Mass well heard, one fervent Holy Communion, may lift us now to an unspeakably higher glory for all the ages. But the time is short, the

days hasten, the hours steal away and do not return forever. A little while and lo, it is eternity.

See, too, how this very saying is a sovereign answer for all the snares and allurements of the world, the devil and the flesh. Their wares grow dim as dross under the sunlight of that same keen thought: "Soon it will be eternity."

When the cunning tempter whispers of goods and fame and pleasures and the world's delights, say to him scornfully: "Away, fallen spirit, get thee away! A little while and it will be eternity! I can spare no time to spend in perishable delights. The day grows on apace. The brief hours fade away before me. The night cometh in which no man can work. What profit to pluck the fleeting pleasure that withers and is gone, to gain a little brief applause, to gather money, to set my heart on houses or lands, or cattle, or silks, or stones, when all these things serve for such a few and passing years. My heart is set upon eternity!"

And even more, much more, when evil desires—of forbidden pleasure or wicked

gain, or sinful idleness, or unkind malice, or revengeful spite—come to plague us and lead us into evil, then these words should be like salt to our lips and like wine to our hearts. "Not so! I will not do this evil deed—a little while and it will be eternity!" How vain, how senseless and foolish a thing, to dare the anger of God and to wound His love, when, as it were, to-morrow it will be eternity! Who would smear his soul with sin when he remembers that he is on the threshold of God's judgment room? Who would drink and be drunk with crime and luxury, upon the very brink of the world to come? Who would barter his soul for a trifle of sinful gain, or a mess of poisonous delight, when the boundless riches of Heaven and the pure ecstasies of God wait so very near before him? For in such a little while it will be eternity!

FASTING SANS HEADACHES

"FATHER," said the Convert, rather earnestly, "do you know I sometimes feel a bit uneasy about this coming time of Lent? What can I do to keep it? I can't fast, you know; I tried it last Ember Days, and got a roaring headache. Yet it seems very odd to me for a Catholic to do no penance at all during the Church's penance-time."

"Fasting from food isn't the only way of doing penance," said Father, with a twinkle in his eye. "You might guess that it was if you watched some of your fellow-parishioners, but it is not. Did it ever occur to you, for example, that one's soul can do a bit of fasting too?"

"One's soul fast! What can you mean?"

"Why, bodily fasting," answered Father, "is curbing the body's appetite for food. Now, hasn't your soul her appetites too? And can't you mortify them?"

"How?" answered the Convert, with some eagerness. "Tell me how!"

"You need only think of some of the soul's appetites," answered Father, "and you'll readily catch what I mean. There's the appetite we all have for doing as we like, for instance. Our way is the only way. If we can't have it, we sulk and fret. Now, if we were to say to our self-will, when it wants its own way very badly: 'No! You can't have it this time. You must do some one else's will for a change. You must be accommodating, gentle, obliging. You must yield and give up your own desires,' isn't that curbing our soul's appetite? Isn't that making our self-will fast? And it won't give you a headache, either, do you think?"

"Whew! I believe I'd rather fast from food," said the Convert, with deep conviction and sincerity.

"No doubt you would. It's excellent penance, be sure, to make your self-will fast. Then there's that other appetite of our soul, the desire of praise, esteem, good name. You might make that fast a bit, too, every now and then. Do some good deed and carefully avoid getting any credit for it whatever. Or keep silence when some one casts a harmless

slur upon you, nettling, but insignificant. Don't answer, don't defend yourself. There's good penance in that!"

"I should say there was!" agreed the Convert rapidly.

"Then there's the tendency we all of us have to grow fussy, and cross and snappish—bad-tempered, in a word. A good strong outburst would relieve us. If we could only vent our impatience on somebody, or something, we'd feel relieved. But that's wrong; make your bad temper fast. Crush down the ugly mood. Hold back the angry word. There's penance for you, isn't it?"

"Thank you, Father," said the Convert softly. "I have enough ways already to last me all through Lent."

"We haven't nearly exhausted the subject, though," said Father, his eyes twinkling brighter than ever. "There's being obliging. What a penance that is at times! Some one at home asks us to do them a little service. We straightway think of a good excuse. Away with it! Say: 'Yes, of course I will,' with a bright face and a cheery tone, and you have made your selfishness fast to good

purpose, I can tell you. No headache, either, I think.

"Then there's almsgiving; that's another way of doing penance. That's making our greediness fast. You're well-to-do, let us say, but not rich. If you keep all you have, you have just enough to be comfortably off. But in comes some good cause, or some deserving fellow in hard luck, and asks you for aid. Say: 'Why, certainly! Here! It means a little inconvenience for me, but it may be life or death for you. Here's the money, and welcome!' Isn't there penance in that?"

"Penance and common sense too," said the Convert. "But how few of us see it that way. I always thought that I was excused from almsgiving, because I have always needed all that I had. Needed it for my comfort, I mean. But your point is good. It's a Christian way of looking at things. Mine was rather a pagan way, I'm afraid."

"Well, you see our life is full of ways of doing penance," went on Father, "which don't hold a single headache between them all. Even the Morning Offering, which you make every day, I hope"—the Con-

vert nodded assent—"is a true act of penance, too, if only it is deep and sincere; because we naturally love to do things for our own self-love, for our own interests, our own good, our own comfort, our own pleasure, our own praise. Now, if we honestly say: 'Not for myself to-day, but for the sweet Heart of Jesus,' and say it honestly and earnestly, and mean it all the day long, there's a touch of penance, you see, even there."

"Thanks, a thousand thanks," said the Convert, holding out his hand. "You've opened my eyes. If I have the nerve to do as I mean to do now, I believe I shall perform some downright good penance before the end of this Lent. But I see it takes nerve. To fast, after all, is largely a question of meal-time. But this sort of penance will keep one's will-power in action pretty well through the whole day."

"Don't think for a moment, though, that I mean to decry fasting as a means of doing penance," said Father, as his visitor rose to depart. "Fasting is the official penance which the Church has chosen for her chil-

dren, and it is sanctioned and made holy by Our Lord's long fasting, and by the faithful practice of all the saints. It has a double merit, too, because it is also a work of obedience. But if a man can't fast from food, I think you realize now that it is simply foolish for him to say, 'I'm free.' There are a hundred appetites within him besides his hunger for food, and he can always make some of these fast to good purpose, indeed."

"Well—if everybody would fast, as you say, from all his unpleasant appetites and ugly inclinations," said the Convert heartily, "what a pleasant sort of perpetual Eastertime this life would soon get to be!"

THE APOSTLESHIP OF SPEECH

We say a great deal nowadays, and very rightly, too, about the Apostleship of the Press, but what of the Apostleship of Speech? For the Press, mighty and far-reaching as it is, has, we all know, its own peculiar limitations, and needs a complement. Many of us can not write, many lack the time or inclination, and even when it is duly sent forth, the printed page is never quite sure of its audience. This man will not read except for amusement, the other distrusts whatever savors of the supernatural, a third is steeled beforehand against anything which hints of Catholicity, or the Church.

But the kindly, spontaneous speech of man to man is easy and common to us all. It murmurs everywhere, on the car, on the street, in offices and homes, kindling its own interest, winning attention, appealing to every one, in spite of his prejudices and his inclinations. It opens an easy way for that genial interchange of personal opinion, of

question and answer, of objection and reply, which clears and recommends, as nothing else can, one's true beliefs, and principles and points of view.

Of course, no one nowadays would praise mere controversy or polemics. Heaven forbid! That odious and ugly wrangling over sacred truths, which only adds stubbornness to each man's conviction, is happily out of mode. But we are in danger of going to the other extreme and following the indifferentism of the age so far that we carefully avoid every mention of sacred things.

This cruel kindness and complaisance we are guilty of sometimes even to our dearest and nearest friends. Cruel one must call it, because we are keeping from them, by our silence, the very truths and principles which we hold as our dearest and most precious possession in this world. If a readiness to share one's money and influence and opportunities is looked for between friends, how much more should there be a frank and willing communication of those eternal truths which enrich and ennoble a man's immortal soul. Yet, if we treated one another in mat-

ters of dollars and cents as we do in issues of the soul's salvation, some of us would have few friends left in the world.

Once, in the murmur and clatter of a crowded street-car, an angry voice rose over the hum of city noises: "You knew the firm was going under," it shouted in ungovernable fury, "and let me go ahead with the deal." A moment's pause followed, in which one might imagine a murmured reply. "You knew I was in for losing, and you were on the right side, and you didn't say a word!" cried the voice again. "You cur! That may be your idea of friendship, but it isn't mine; don't talk to me again!"

The angry man was right. That was no true friend who let him stake his money on a rotten venture and never said a word. Heaven grant that our own friends may not have cause to hurl a like reproach at us on the Judgment Day!

I remember still the regretful pathos with which a dear old gentleman, who in the thoughtlessness of youth had entered into associations which kept him from his religious duties, told me of the strange silence which

every one kept toward him on that one subject of which he had most need to hear. "There was So-and-so," said he, "a good Catholic, and a firm friend of mine, but he never said the word. And there was Father N——; many a time I laughed and chatted with him, but he never said the word. And there's X, and Y, and Z—— Ah!" the old man would finish, "and now that I'm back in the Church of God, it seems to me I've lost the most of my life!" All for want of the word!

No man of us all can plead a lack of such occasions. Many a Catholic, nowadays, is almost solitary in a circle of unbelieving associates. Is silence friendly then? The man who drops into a seat beside you and wishes you a cheery good-morning, may be as starved and stinted of all knowledge of things divine as a tribesman of the Moros. More than possibly, as things stand now in the United States, he has never said a childish prayer by his mother's knee; never learned to reverence the Sacred Name; never heard, at home or at school, the saving truths of Christ; never once been brought face to face

with the stupendous truths that there is an Infinite God, and that man has an immortal soul! It is not malice with him, this denseness to sacred truth; it is ignorance, it is preoccupation.

This is a distracted age; we live fast, we notice only what is thrust upon us. All that he has heard of God's Holy Name may have been (dreadful thought) when it was used in blasphemy, or as the nice ornament of some well-turned phrase; or at the best, as a vague symbol of nature or human-kind, lacking personality and dim of definition. Ask the missionary, or him who has care of the instruction of converts, whether this picture be too darkly drawn. Religion to this man may be only the queer fancy some men have to while away a Sunday morning. That God is a person, even as himself; that the soul has ages of endless life before it; that the world is only a trying-out place for the brightest or darkest hereafter; that there is a hell, the blaze of the anger of God, and a Heaven, the smile of His tenderness; that every man and woman is sacred, is of God's own kindred; that what seems blind chance

is only a bit, ill-seen, of the vast schemes of Infinite Prevision—what does he know, what has he ever dreamed of all these things?

But you are his friend. He will listen to you, if you are ready for a kindly explanation. He is interested, after all, in most things human, in your affairs particularly. What a revelation to his ignorance, and what a stimulus from his dangerous preoccupation with merely earthly and temporal things, if you were sometimes to take occasion from current themes to explain those lovely and satisfying doctrines of the Church, which please and thrill by their beauty and saneness even where faith does not enter in and beget acceptance of their truth!

If it were golf you were interested in, or stocks, or futures, or horses, or a new brand of goods, or a coming marriage, it would go hard, but he would have to listen all the way downtown, and that right cheerfully. Well, try him sometimes, with kindly tact, and opportunely, on some Catholic theme.

I say opportunely, but fit occasions are legion nowadays. With almost every ques-

tion of the day there is bound up some point of Catholic principle or belief. The labor questions of the times call up, with their multifarious perplexities, those sanest showings-forth of the mind of Christendom, the masterly Encyclicals of Leo XIII. In this connection one will naturally think of the vast influence for good of the Papacy on the world; of the true nature of that spiritual leadership, by which Christ made Peter and his successors not sinless indeed but infallible, when they teach us in His name. Thence opens wide the whole question of the Apostolic Succession, then one may speak of the Roman Curia, and all the admirable government of the Church, so much misrepresented because so little understood. One may fall to explaining, also, the history of the Papacy; why, for instance, some great ecclesiastics may have been great rascals, without their unprincipled lives reflecting either on the doctrine or discipline of the eternal Church.

Or it may be that the sad state of unhappy France comes up for discussion, and one is naturally moved to explain the true re-

lation of the Church and State; or the reasons and policy of the Church's prohibition of Secret Societies—not always for what they are, but sometimes also for what they may come to be; or the Parochial School question, and why the Church so stoutly demands Catholic teaching for Catholic children.

Again, the questions which turn upon Marriage and Divorce are forever bobbing up in our speech nowadays. The uncompromising stand of the Church on such matters, her watchful guarding of the sanctity of marriage, and her reasons for it, how natural to dwell on these!

Or Socialism—how many topics does it not suggest? The reason for the necessary and unrelenting hostility of the Church, which stands for piety and justice, against a creed which in the concrete is both irreligious and unjust; and so on, to subjects without number.

"But how in the name of goodness," I seem to hear some one cry out sadly, "is one to be ready to give good explanations on such subjects as these?"

A proper question, and one which calls for a whole treatise by itself. But one can condense after the manner of the testy gentleman who cried out in answer to a similar inquiry: "God bless you, sir! Why not go and read?"

Naturally, to be a proper Catholic, one must glance now and then over Catholic papers and have some acquaintance with Catholic magazines and books. But "why not," to be sure? If the followers of Christian Science and its airy inconsistencies can toil to be letter-perfect in "Mother Eddy's" clueless mystifications, so as to have at least a quotation ready for every need; and if the Spencerian agnostic can bear to trace out his leader's maunderings to the dusty end, surely we Catholics can all endure to become prompt and ready with the warm and human, yet Divine and Heavenly, truths and principles of Christ.

Wrong-headed folk, with flimsy theories, have often a dreadful gift of voluble exposition, which puts us children of the light to shame. In season and out of season they din away at their pet theory, until by mere

repetition they wear it a place in men's thoughts, or even a standing in their esteem. We must not imitate their fanatical excesses —indeed there is little danger as things go with us now; but the temper of the times is such that even the truth can not dispense with some of this emphasis of repetition and ready reply. The age is crowded with clamoring teachers; if even truth is silent it will be unregarded as well. On the other hand, by kindly explanation, timely comment and friendly expostulation and reply, one's beliefs and views are sure to gain a hearing, and a hearing is all that Catholic Truth need ask.

In fine, look on this picture, and on this. Our friend Dick has a fearfully keen nose for controversy. His type, I own, is somewhat rare in these days. Give him but a little opening and he will argue away for hours, with the slightest encouragement, nay, in spite of the most evident distaste and disgust on the part of his unwilling victim. Dick means well, to be sure (his selfishness is half unconscious); he knows a great deal, his speech is fluent and sincere; he only lacks

the heavenly gift of tact and opportuneness, but lacking this, his acrid fluency has made many a helpless fellow sore on religion and savage against pious talk for all after days.

Tom, on the other hand, and his name is many, runs quite to the other extreme. He is the discreetest fellow in the world, and sheers off from questions of belief and principles like a timid hare at the hunter's halloo! He seldom breathes a word that can benefit any one, his talk is all remote from religious issues, and most of his friends scarcely know whether he is a Catholic or a fellow of Huxley, or of the German visionaries. He breaks a commandment. His light never shines at all!

Harry, on the other hand—God bless him! —holds the difficult mean. When he speaks of religious matters he does it in as easy, interested a way as when he talks politics or business. His mind runs naturally on the theme, and his interest carries you with him. He knows and he thinks on what he knows, and remembers it readily and in opportune connections. There is neither false shame nor harsh self-assertiveness in his tone. You

see earnest-faced men listening to his quiet explanations with a sort of steady wonder; and when he pauses you notice that they sink back and murmur: "By Jove! that sounds sensible. I never could understand just what you Catholics thought on that point before."

Ah, if there were only more Harrys now amongst us!

THE APOSTLESHIP OF CONSISTENCY

WHERE is the sincere and thoughtful Catholic who has not strongly wished at times that he could make some converts to the one true Faith? All of us know so deeply, from our everyday experience, the sweetness and the strength, the beauty, tenderness and power of our holy religion, and the cheer and guidance which it gives us on our way toward Heaven, that we should be dull clods indeed not to desire to share these amazing and neglected treasures with our fellow-men.

It is true, of course, that a sincere and God-fearing non-Catholic may hope to save his soul. True, also, that there is many such a one who puts half-hearted Catholics utterly to shame by the earnestness, uprightness and goodness of his life. But if such men walk so well in the twilight, how gloriously, we think, they would run onward in the noonday splendor! If they fight so valiantly, nourished with the crumbs that have fallen

from the children's table, what heroes they would become if they were fed on the strong Bread of Angels, and given to drink of the sweet waters of God's full and satisfying Truth? The fervor and earnestness we have remarked in so many converts confirms this view and urges us the more to the work of conversion. How ardently they leap forward in the ways of sanctity, when first they feel the mighty aid of the Sacraments and of Holy Mass! How eagerly they receive the rich teachings of Catholic tradition and embrace the thousand helps and stays which God's Church alone can give!

He would be an ungenerous and selfish man—or, at least, a very thoughtless one—who had never wished to make a convert to Catholic truth. But when it comes to choosing out the means, the average Catholic man or woman may well be perplexed to know just how the good work is to be begun.

"Arguing is no use," they say; "it only makes people stubborn and angry. To explain the truths of Faith is all very well, but how am I to get people to listen and how am I to answer the awkward questions they

will be sure to ask? I can not write books, nor give lectures, nor preach sermons; it isn't my business, and, besides, I haven't the talent nor the time. So what in the world am I to do?"

This may be all very natural and true, and if these were indeed the only ways of making converts to the Faith, many Catholics might be pardoned for shrinking from the task. Happily, these are not the only ways. There is an argument stronger with most men than any logic—a way of preaching open to every one, and to which no living soul can choose but listen, the argument of steadfast good example, of a consistent living-up to our Catholic principles and our Catholic beliefs.

We walk about in this world very obscurely, it may be. We do not seem prominent persons in the scheme of things; nor apt to draw men's eyes to look at us. Yet every day of our lives, almost at every hour of our days, at home and in the street, in the busy hours or when we are taking our ease and our pleasure, careless and free and unconscious of the world's remark, we are being watched, studied, thought of, imitated it may be, by

the restless, eager spirits of our fellow-men. What is a man so interested in as in his neighbor? What does he talk of more often; what does he speculate upon so eagerly; by what is he so deeply moved, as by the sayings and doings, the character and principles of other men?

Blind and deluded though men often are as to their own proper vices and virtues, they have a wonderful shrewdness in searching out and summing up the genuine character of another. It is no use, in the matter of religious principle especially, to try to play the saint and be the sinner. Nothing but sincere and practical fidelity, the pure gold of honesty, seven times tried, will wear well and shine well for long against the rough usage and trying ways of this hurly-burly world!

These are truisms, as we all know; but apply them to yourself, to the individual Catholic, moving about in the highways of life and dealing with your fellows. Though they know that you are "a Catholic," many of them realize only vaguely what the name implies. But if they recognize in you a man

apart from and distinguished above his fellow-men by reason of his honesty, industry, kindness to his neighbors, by his truth, honor and good faith, they will grow a bit curious to learn more of what Catholics think, and strive for, and believe. Your courage, your consistency and modest faithfulness to your principles will make you stand out in noble relief against the general carelessness and self-indulgence of the times. They will conceive a huge respect for the Faith which can so lift a man above the common lust and avarice of the world; they will inquire into the Church's teachings, open their hearts to her appeal, and God's grace will have an entrance to win them over to the truth.

And you, sincere, simple, and consistent to your Catholic principles, without any noise or argument, or any array of lectures or of books, you will truly have converted them, you will have convinced and persuaded them by the most convincing, most persuasive of all arguments, by the solid and practical proof of a life consistent with your holy faith.

There is another body of non-Catholics

who *do* know very well what a Catholic is supposed to profess and practise and believe. They are in need, not of information, but of conviction. They see the beauty of the Faith, but are not yet quite sure of its truth, and so they waver in that dim borderland which lies between "I doubt" and "I believe." Your actions, far, far more than your words, have a keen, almost an agonizing interest for such men as these. From the actions of Catholics they seek to judge, alas! of the truth or falsehood of the Catholic Faith. They do not stop to argue that a man may be convinced, but inconsistent, professing high ideals, and practising unworthy ones. They merely say to themselves:

"There is So-and-so. He is a Catholic. See how he acts! In business he is no better than the rest of us. In his family circle he is no angel; in his recreations he is no saint. Yet he is a Catholic. These Catholics do not practise what they preach. No Catholicity for me!"

Who has balked his conversion, and helped the powers of darkness to keep him from the light? Sad to say, one of the hardest to

answer of all arguments against the Faith, is the evil behavior of men who profess to believe.

Or, again, more happily, we may hear some non-Catholic remark: "There is So-and-so—a clean, upright, noble fellow if there ever was one. He seems to have some secret which the rest of us lack. He uses the world as if he used it not. Industrious, brisk, businesslike, capable—yes! But he seems all the while to have his heart set on something above and beyond. He believes in a hereafter, and lives for it. His family is holy. His home is a sanctuary—bright, clean, cheery, loving—with an atmosphere of peace and joy which are not quite of this world. He is a knight—that's what he is—a Bayard, without base fear and without reproach. I'd like to know his secret, and I believe it is his Faith! If it is, then the Catholic religion is the religion for me!" Who has been the chief instrument under God to bring this wavering soul into the light of His Father's house?

Not many weeks ago, at Sunday Mass in one of our great cities, a poor serving-maid

was going to Communion. Her faith was pure and deep, and the reverence and love of her soul were strikingly expressed in every look and gesture. How little she dreamed of preaching or giving edification! But one who was not a Catholic, who was hesitating at the very threshold of the Faith, had come to the church that morning, and was quietly watching the faithful as they walked up to the Holy Table.

"How wonderful the fervor and recollection of that poor girl was!" said she afterward. "One can see how truly she believes that Christ is present in the Sacrament."

So it is with us all. Will we, nill we, our daily actions blaze out a message and token to the watchful eyes of men.

"If we but knew when we were under observation we would be doubly careful and consistent then!" Well, we are under observation always and everywhere, in the eyes of a critical and watchful age. In the old days the Church had need of martyrs, which means "witnesses" to give bloody evidence of her truth to a cold and unbelieving world. She has need of martyrs still, not bloody martyrs

now, but martyrs to duty, to sincerity, to faith, to the consistent practice of the Christian creed. Who will credit that we believe in the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, believe that this life-giving Bread is Christ Himself, fearfully humiliated for our love, if we avoid the Tabernacle where He dwells until we are driven thither on Sunday morning by the threat of mortal sin? Who will credit us with a faith in the last great judgment if we do not act as though we looked forward to being one day brought to judgment?

Ah, if we took all this to heart, and acted out in every word and deed the faith that is in us, what noble and effective apostles we should be to bring our friends and fellows into the fold of Christ! Writing is an excellent means to make conversions; kind and tactful conversation is a powerful aid; so is prayer; so is timely comment and explanation. But how the good work done toward converting the world would double and treble—and go on doubling and trebling by leaps and bounds—if only the great body of Catholic men and women would bestir themselves to spread the truth abroad, and shine

it, so to speak, in their neighbor's eyes—by the strong, direct, appealing, irresistible means of living up steadfastly to the Faith which is in them—by the exercise of the great Apostleship of Consistency!

"NOT RIGGED TO DO IT"

I once knew an amiable old gentleman—not so very old either, but in that mellow way of life where one's little ways are set forevermore—who had a gift for many useful things. He could make you anything you liked in wood, and make it beautifully, with a trim, old-fashioned completeness few modern carvers or joiners can attain. He could make relishes—old-world relishes—full of piquant savors that made simple fare a feast for kings. He could mend precious broken things, old china, or trinkets, that you mourned over, so that their last state was prettier than the first. In a word, there was no end to the neat and useful things this much-accomplished man could do.

"What a convenient person to have about one," you will straightway think to yourself. So, to be sure, he was. Yet the full comfort and usefulness of his varied talents was hindered a bit by just a single oddity he had.

Whenever you approached him, as people often did, to ask the exercise of some one of his varied talents, he would give you a rueful glance, and screwing up his forehead in regret, would answer mournfully: "I'd gladly fix it for you, so gladly, but, do you know, I am not *rigged* to do it." That was the haunting shadow that stalked his path. He was never rigged!

Let us hasten to add it was not laziness in him, not in the least. Nor was it a cheap excuse, nor any unwillingness to oblige and serve you that made him say it. He was the most serviceable of men, and as full of kindness as summer is of sunshine. It was a real and obstinate difficulty he always saw, crouching like a lion in his way. He was not rigged to do it! Perhaps it was a tool which he must absolutely have to polish off his work, and which, he knew for certain, was nowhere in the county. Perhaps it was some delicate ingredient, if you spoke of relishes, without which his best recipe was a mere mess and silly failure, and which didn't grow he was sure anywhere this side of salt water. Perhaps—oh, there were any num-

ber of perhapses, but the gist of them all was this: he simply wasn't rigged to do it!

Of course, with his kind heart, it was not so hard to get him over this mountainous objection. And when he had once set his mind to do the thing you asked, rigged or not rigged, his ingenuity was a match for anything. He could use tools out of all measure of their common purpose, and make a penknife do for any tool. He could torture allspice and onions till they breathed of tarragon, and make a homely kitchen garden yield all the savors of Gascony and Spain. But despite these various resources of his native genius, that thought forever haunted him like an obsession and held his hand from any trial of skill; that sad refrain was ever in his ears, "I am not rigged to do it!"

How I should like, if morals were not so tedious, to cut a sheaf of serviceable comparisons from the amiable eccentricity of that good man I knew! You and I, my dear and patient reader, have given the same excuse, many a time, to save the doing of some golden deed. Do you remember when the

good thought came to you—of what?—some deed of mercy and kindness, not easy, perhaps, to do, but rich in promise of results. It came like an inspiration. Who knows? Perhaps it was truly a message from the Father of lights, bidding you help your brother. You were moved to do it generously, you planned the ways and means. Then came chill Calculation, with its selfish breath and blew cold on your generous fervor. You said, in effect at least: "I am not rigged to do it. If I had more time, if I had more talents, if I were in a position to do the thing as it should be done, if I were the proper person, if circumstances were other than they are, if this, if that—ah, then, then I would do it gladly, nobly, effectively. But now, alas, I am not rigged!" So the inspiration faded, the little voice within you faltered and was still, the opportunity escaped you. That credit stands forever blank for you on the great ledgers of the Chancery of Heaven.

Or again, it was some work of zeal that called upon us. Perhaps we were asked to bear our share in aiding some noble charity. Perhaps it was our personal effort that was

wanted to help a good cause on. How many chances for unselfish effort have come to our doors and knocked, perhaps tapped only timidly, perhaps rapped long and loud! And we, opening a little chink lest they should rush in upon us unawares and spoil our calm seclusion, we have answered through the cranny: "Pray excuse me; I am not rigged. To tell the truth, I can not see my way to aid you. Another time, maybe, when this and that and the other are off my hands. But now, I really haven't got the time, the money. I am not rigged to do it! I pray you, go away; importunate or timid pleader, hold me excused."

And the good deed went on to a neighbor's door, far, far less rigged, perhaps, than we, and it was welcomed and entered in and blessed the dwelling. But our opportunity is passed away.

Did you smile, dear reader, when you thought of the queer persuasion of yonder old friend of mine, that he was never "rigged" to exercise his various crafts and talents? So do the angels smile at us, for so often thinking that we are not "rigged" to

do the good that comes to seek us. His ingenuity and deftness were far more than a match for any ordinary awkwardness of tools or stuff; he was always "rigged" by his own natural genius to do whatever he had a mind to. So could we accomplish many a worthy deed we balk at now, if only we were content to use the homely means that lie about us and within us.

Now, gentle reader, descend from generalities and look about you a bit, and see how many good works lie ready to your hand. Will you say: "I am not rigged to do them?" There are your own home-folk, the people of your intimate acquaintance. Have you not had many a thought of them? of good words that you might speak to them, to cheer them and guide them along better ways? of kind encouragement and sympathy that you could offer, to help them through dangerous passes or hearten them along noble paths? Could you not, many a time, instruct or admonish or console them, as each one needs? If you say, "I am not prepared," what does that mean, to be sure? Merely that you are not perfect, that you might be

better fit. Who of mortals could not say the same with regard to any worthy undertaking whatever? Any man or woman among us, with prudence and right feeling, can give some worthy aid to his own people, in his own circle of friends.

Then there is the wider sphere of your acquaintances. We can give only the vaguest outlines here, which every one must sketch in for himself. Have we not all of us some friends who need a word of kindly instruction in matters of religious practice and belief? Could we not say the word, and aid them on toward Heaven? Ah, "I am not ready," "I don't know enough myself," "I hesitate to intrude, with my very scanty qualifications"; in a word, "I am not rigged to do it," and so God's work must go undone.

See how one could widen the application of this little instance until it helped us to account for half the ignorance, the folly and the sin that blights the earth. The ignorant are ignorant still; the foolish and the sinful are unadmonished, because the men and women who might tactfully and lovingly step in and remedy the evil "are not pre-

pared, do not feel equal to the task, are not quite fit just now"—"they are not rigged to do it!"

Does God mean us to act so, do you think? Will He take this monotonous excuse of ours for leaving His work so sadly undone, and for failing so mournfully to help our sisters and our brothers toward His knowledge and His service and His love? For—and here is a very serious thought indeed—we sometimes seem to throw the blame on God with this sorry excuse of ours. He gives to us these duties, these opportunities, these suggestions of His grace—to us and to no others, no angel and no saint. He gives them to us as we are, not as we might, or could, or would, or should have been. It is to us with our imperfections, our shortcomings, our insufficiencies, our ignorances and our little worth, that He has given in charge the welfare of our brother's soul, perhaps even his soul's salvation. For the one word that he will take may be one that only we could give him. He may be waiting for our word of counsel, teaching, admonition. We, and we only, may have the key to fit the rusty wards

of his poor heart. How melancholy if we should hold back and fail to say the word, because, forsooth, "we are not rigged."

One may say as much about the many other avenues of effort in behalf of God, of the Church, of Catholic charities, which stretch away before each Catholic's feet. If you have leisure, there are the many works of social charity—helping the poor, housing the homeless child, teaching the ignorant, visiting the prisoner, nursing the sick, comforting the sorrowful and the unhappy—all, in a word, of the various and the precious works which we call "corporal works of mercy." Then there are the spiritual works of mercy, too, which each one of us learned by rote from his catechism. Surely all of us are fit and equal and able for some of these.

Let us go back again to our kindly old friend of the beginning and from his memory draw a happy omen. He, you will remember, though he was always haunted by that dark apprehension of "not being rigged to do it," got over it bravely at a few words of affectionate persuasion, and turned his skilful hand right manfully to the work he was

besought to do. Are not you and I, dear reader, equally good-natured, and will we not, in our weightier tasks of Christian love and charity, copy his hearty compliance, no less than we have copied his quaint excuse? When hereafter a wise and prudent and fruitful thought of doing some good work for God or our neighbor pops into our head, we shall say to ourselves right manfully, not hearing our lower self's denial: "Now do be good, and set to work at it, and don't be offering that tiresome old excuse again: 'Really, you know, I'd like to, but—I'm not just rigged to do it!' "

OUR TALK AT HOME

To love and do good to one another, that is, after all, a very great part of what we are to accomplish here in this world. And to do us justice, we are usually willing enough to help and benefit our neighbor, if only we see a practicable and present way. Half of those who do next to nothing for other folk, act so because they think of nothing to do. But tell us what is to be done and how to go about it, and you shall see some hearty workers indeed.

Now there is a great deal of very useful talk nowadays about various apostleships, and the word "Apostleship" in this connection, usually means nothing else than a way of doing to our neighbor some spiritual good. Some of these are for the rich, like the Apostleship of Endowment; some for the learned or the talented, like the Apostleship of the Written Word; others (and those the most interesting), are for any one and every one among us, like the Apostleship of Prayer, or the Apostleship of Speech.

We have said something already, very briefly, about the second of these apostleships, that of frank, kindly and familiar speech upon Catholic subjects and Catholic views and beliefs, with those who come within our everyday circle of influence and appeal. We are all of us constantly talking to one another, discussing, inquiring, replying, exchanging opinions and ideas. And so, we said, any one of us needs only to throw into his daily talk some genial, honest, interesting words of Catholic truth, to become at once a real apostle, that is to say, a messenger, a herald of Catholic Ethics and Faith.

Now let us descend a little into some of the special forms which this Apostleship of Speech may assume and some of the special opportunities it may offer us, and it would be well to begin, where charity does in the proverb, right at home. Fathers and mothers, big brothers and big sisters, I wonder how many of us realize the power we are constantly using for good or ill, the influence of our daily speech at home.

We boast sometimes that "home" is one of the most tender and meaning words in

our English tongue. We declare that many other languages have no real equivalent to convey all the wealth and warmth of loving thought and memory, of kindly, generous feeling which stirs in us at this holy syllable "home." To have a happy home is, we rightly think, an unspeakable blessing. To lack a home, for man or woman or child, is a capital and dire misfortune. "A man's home," according to the old English saying which we have made our own, "is his castle," his secure retreat, a kingdom of comfort and of cheer, a little stronghold of affection and interest and kindly sympathy against the rude buffets of this selfish and unfeeling world.

We know, too, when we reflect on the matter, that home is a little commonwealth, where each one has his part to play for the well-being of the whole. Mother and father have, to be sure, a paramount influence; but every one down to the youngest child has his share in making or unmaking the peacefulness and holiness of home.

In what way is this influence most often and most effectively exerted? To be sure,

by our daily and common speech! What is hastily said at breakfast, or slips from us as we pass about the house, or is discussed at the family dinner, or chatted about around the evening lamp, or mooted in the parlor—this most perhaps of all, makes or mars the peace and happiness and holiness of our home. For in these chance remarks, these off-hand conversations and familiar, cosy talks, we throw off countless little hints and coruscations, so to speak, of our most inward and intimate selves. We reveal our sudden thoughts and impulses, we show our desires, our principles, our aims, all, whether it be good or ill, that we have been cherishing and fostering and brooding over for years and years. These things leap out, sometimes in a tiny sentence, sometimes in a single word like little sparks of goodness or of wickedness, and kindle fires of good or evil in our hearers' inmost heart. The doors and windows of their hearts are all thrown open in the summer air of trustfulness and love, and our flying words blow in easily for weal or woe. And this goes on, not for an hour or a day, but for all the long months and years

of the familiar intercourse of home. No wonder then that we influence one another by our daily speech of words and actions; for actions, too, are a sort of speech and often carry our meaning very much better and more easily than words.

Parents sometimes feel deeply distressed when they see, growing in their tender children, the lineaments of their own shortcomings and sins. They will put on a very serious expression and take Mary or Tom aside to warn him earnestly against letting that evil habit gain upon him. Do they hope that one official warning so ceremoniously given will stand for a moment against the long, quiet talk and action of so many years? "Don't, for Heaven's sake," they will say, "get into that ugly way of criticizing people!" But has not the lad heard you for years dwelling on the faults of your friends? Can one brief gust of studied sermonizing avail to sweep away that heavy and brooding cloud of innumerable and daily acts and words?

It is worth while, then, very, very much worth while, to give some care and thought

to how we may carry on this Apostleship of the Home. And this should weigh on us all the more because of the circumstance that we must all be either apostles or perverters there. Abroad, one can fight shy of company and keep pretty much to himself, not doing any one so very much good or harm. But it is not so at home. Here we must all be constantly taking sides and influencing our little sphere for good or ill. Talk we must, act we must in the presence of every one, and not to talk and act properly and holily and well, is to be talking and acting badly, doing our share to mar the sanctities of our home.

Of course, no one will here understand me to mean to commend anything like a sanctimonious way of acting, or a forcedly religious style of talk. The only good purpose that these would serve at home would be to start some merry laughter that would bring us to our senses again. But I do most heartily mean that we should particularly and earnestly try always to speak and to act worthily and holily among our own people, by our own fireside.

First of all there are the things we should not speak of at all. Here one might mention a very host of harmful and ugly subjects which too often, alas, creep into our talk to poison the quiet air of home. The bitter and open word of slander and rash judgment, we need not pause to censure, but there is a subtler way of hurting our neighbor by little sneers, discreditable anecdotes, left-handed compliments, which begin: "So-and-so is a good fellow; I always liked the chap, but——" and here follows an unkindly stab. There is a way of speaking of one's Pastor, one's Bishop, and what not, which some good folk fall into from very thoughtlessness, but which sadly hurts the holiness of home. You know quite well that Father X is a good, fervent man. But he has his faults (as who has not?), and you make free to point them out quite emphatically, over the roast. "Who is the worse, pray, for that? The grown-ups will understand, and the children don't take any harm!" Are you so sure that they will understand? Has not a light word of disparagement, carelessly spoken, sometimes tarnished your respect and

esteem for a friend? Again, there is little Tom or Jerry, who listens with wide eyes to everything papa or mamma or big brother is saying. Can he make excuses or allowances? No, but he can comprehend quite well that after all there is something wrong with Father X, to whom the good Sisters always tell him to be so respectful. Do you remember when you were young yourself, and made your first discoveries as to the faults of your youthful heroes? How long the memory of such disillusionments remains!

It is a pitiful thing to see the atmosphere of the world creep in and taint the holiness of home. To be forever praising men whose only claim to praise is that they have succeeded in getting name and fame, or lands and gold, is pitiful in us travelers toward the Eternal Sunrise; but it is a crime to let the little ones hear us singing our psalms to Mammon day after day, day after day, as though worldly fortune were the last end of man. Will not they, too, become little idolaters, and give incense to the god of gold? Do we not sometimes forget that what we most praise will be what our sons and daugh-

ters will very likely most desire in the days to be?

We have dwelt upon our duties to the children especially, in this matter of our daily speech at home, because they are most impressionable and confiding, and will catch most readily the trend and color of their elders' thought. They listen most when we least suspect it, and are more interested sometimes in what we say to each other than in what is directly spoken to themselves. But we have a duty to the grown-ups no less. Who can dwell in an atmosphere of pure and worthy speech and not be the better for it? Who can hear unworthy words for long and not run a risk of being himself defiled?

A meaner sort of conversation still is the foolish cackling of the snob. Society and exclusiveness, and the delicate and senseless distinctions between Mr. and Mrs. Tweedledum and the Tweedledees are not fit subjects for the family circle, where should breathe honesty, simplicity, and peace. To worship gold and lands is bad enough in all conscience, but it is hardly so base as to worship social distinctions, airy nothings, too

often founded on no solid reasons whatever.

"But what is one to talk of?" An easy answer would be to borrow the words of St. Paul which he wrote to the Philippians in a somewhat different meaning indeed, but which come in very aptly here: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things" (Phil. iv. 8) and speak upon them in the kind commerce of family talk.

Let us descend a bit more into particulars. To put it all in a nutshell, one would like to have more really Catholic talk at Catholic firesides. By Catholic one does not mean parish talk, nor church talk, still less talk merely about Catholic men and women, but talk which is concerned with subjects of truly Catholic interest, and inspired with Catholic feelings and Catholic thought. Like it or not, we Catholics are a people apart. We have our own spiritual color, our own characteristics, our own proper beliefs and viewpoints and principles. Whatever savors of these

should not only be sacred to us, but interesting also, and should make some matter of our daily speech. We should know at least the current history of Catholic interests, as a good citizen knows the current history of his native land. A Catholic who does not care to speak of Catholic matters is a far worse anomaly than an American who knows and cares nothing for American interests and affairs. In this regard, one fears, the talk of our Catholic homes is far too colorless. Mothers and fathers, big sisters and big brothers, do the little ones at home gather from your daily speech that deep loyalty and intelligent interest, that steadfast earnestness and wide-awake zeal with respect to things Catholic, which you would wish them to acquire now in the soft, impressionable days of youth?

One might here mention a whole host of subjects upon which Catholic folk should sometimes think and speak at home, but one would have to vary it a bit to suit every reader, for we are not all of equal wit, nor have we all the same interests, nor the same cares, nor surroundings. But take up some

good Catholic paper and glance with interest over the news it brings of Catholic affairs and doings in this and in other lands. We find there letters from the Holy See to the faithful of Christendom, tidings of Catholic enterprise in charitable and social work, in politics, letters, and art, the conquests of the Church's missionaries, the achievements of her religious orders and congregations, the plans and doings of her lay-folk, a thousand and one items of Catholic bearing and significance which Catholic readers should be glad to see.

Truly, to most of us, a greater interest in Catholic papers would give a finer, fuller flow of Catholic speech and Catholic thought. Does not the secular press feed our minds with most of the matter for our casual talk? If we would only read more Catholic books and let the Catholic papers give us more food for thought, our lips would blossom easily enough into worthy and Catholic speech abroad and at home.

I think I hear a strong cry of protest: "Why, to do all this, we should have to begin and educate ourselves all over again!" A

very wise observation! Perhaps we should; but is it not worth while, for the sake of the holiness and happiness of our own home circle, to learn all over again, if need be, the ways and topics of Catholic speech? It may need some effort and watchfulness. We may have at first often to repress the rising word, or discipline the frivolous thought—but patience, courage! Every effort means an easier victory next time. And when we have thoroughly reformed and disciplined our speech according to the sane and blessed lines of Catholic principles, we shall, at the same time, have formed our minds and souls nearer to the high ideal of Christian virtue. For, "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." When we have learned to speak as we should, to bear our part bravely, kindly and tactfully in making pure and holy the atmosphere of our homes, we shall indeed have become true apostles, mighty influences for good on all about us. We shall have learned to practise one of the noblest works which is given to man in this world, the work of doing good to others.

THE COMMON CATHOLIC

It is a weakness of our poor human hearts to wish to be uncommon, unusual, exceptional—distinguished in some way or other from the men around us, and so we shrink from any term which links us all together, all us poor sons and daughters of Adam, upon one level of equality. Men would rather be bizarre, extravagant or even wicked, some of them, than be common, ordinary and tamely usual.

So there is many a one who finds a cold discouragement in the thought that he comes under the head of the "common Catholics" —that the work to which God has called him is the everyday apostleship of the common man. We grow disheartened, most of us—we are sore dispirited and listless, and lose all hope of doing anything very much worth while for God so soon as we remember that we are, after all, only one of the great, uncounted host of ordinary men, of common Christians, of common soldiers of God. If this listlessness. this despair of doing any-

thing truly great and worthy for God's Church, is apt to chill the endeavor of all common Christians, who do not feel themselves called to serve God and His Church in the priesthood or the religious life, it is especially apt to discourage and deter the lowly and simple folk among us, the man and woman who feel that their talents, their influence or their opportunities give them no weight with men, and that they are, in the full sense of the term, only very common, obscure and uninfluential folk indeed.

Yet how wrong and foolish all this is! For are not the common things the most necessary and important? Are battles fought and victories won without the aid of the common soldier? Let us look with God's eyes upon our lot, our talents and our opportunities and we shall be wonderfully cheered and encouraged—we ordinary men—and heartened to do manfully and well the great work which He has set before us, and which He will have none do for Him but us, ourselves.

"God must love the common people," quoth shrewd old Abraham Lincoln, "He

makes so many of them." And in its way the saying holds a deal of truth. For what God loves in us is not our petty little talents or riches or distinctions, unspeakably small and trivial in His eyes; what He loves in us is our humanity, made to His image, and raised by grace to be in a wonderful way His very image indeed!

He loves us as common men, gifted with His grace, plodding through weary ways, toward the glory of our common Heaven! Notice, in connections such as this, how that poor word "common" loses all its low and sorry meanings and becomes fit to describe even the glory of the saints!

God loves us then, all of us, as common men. Our differences and distinctions, each from each, by which some of us seem to tower mountain-high above the rest, are as nothing to Him, who sees all things as they are. It is our own poor selves, let us say it once again, our body and our soul, and, above all, the sanctifying grace which He has given us of His common bounty, that makes us precious in the clear eyes of God. We must realize this very deeply or we shall never

have the courage to do the work God wills. Let us bring it home to ourselves by some further thoughts.

Once on a time there lived about the lake Genesareth, in the obscure land of Palestine, twelve to all outward seeming very ordinary men. There was Simon, and Andrew his brother, who were fishermen. So, too, were John and James, the sons of Zebedee. There was Nathaniel, of Cana in Galilee, an out-of-the-way country place, and Philip and Bartholomew and the rest, all very ordinary men. Last of all there was one Levi, a cursed publican, a pariah among his own people, with whom perhaps none of the rest had ever spoken, for he was beneath even their social level, the lowliest of common men. Now, as we all know, it was these twelve common men who evangelized the world! How did it happen? We know the story well. Jesus of Nazareth passed by, and called them to be His disciples. He taught them His heavenly doctrine. He bade them go abroad over the earth and preach His Kingdom to mankind.

Better men than they might well have

been pardoned for drawing back in fear; but though they were ordinary men, His grace made them humble, patient and obedient, and they went forth simply and trustingly and changed the world.

Of course, we other ordinary men and women will straightway object, that these apostles touched and heard the Saviour, the Light of the World, that they had their mission from His very lips, that the Holy Spirit of God descended on them, and that they had high and superhuman powers of miracles and prophecy. But so have you heard Christ, from the lips of His priests, His chosen envoys; so have you touched Him (ah, most sweetly and efficaciously!) in Holy Communion; so has God given you a mission to spread His word, if you will only heed.

Your faith is your mission, which must be made known among all men, among the pagans of this day, as among the pagans of that earlier time. Your hope is your mission which gives you such earnest of a vast reward for your brotherly toil for other men. Above all, your charity is your mission, which

stirs you up to love God and your neighbor with a sincere heart, diligent to labor and suffer in bringing your neighbor to the love of God.

And the Holy Ghost? He has been with you from your Baptism unless you drove Him from you. He came to you in greater intimacy in Confirmation. He chose you then with a solemn choice to be soldiers and apostles of Christ.

As for the miracles and the prophecies, these were needful to the apostles, because they were to preach a new and a hard doctrine to an incredulous world. But we, Christ's lesser apostles, are to use instead of these extraordinary arguments, the simple persuasion of good lives, of simple charity, of the light of holiness and virtue which our deeds are to make to shine in the eyes of men.

Let us go forth, then, you and I, common men, ordinary men, what you will, as God made us with all our limitations, our faults, our weaknesses. Let us go forth, honestly and simply, to the divine and holy work which God has given us to do in this world.

Let us go forth and quietly, earnestly, tenderly speak with our brothers and sisters, common men and women like ourselves. They are exceedingly many, and very needy and blind and poor in the goods of life eternal, and we have the light and the doctrine, the wisdom and riches of Christ's true Faith. We have that to give them for want of which they languish in darkness—and we can so easily give it by our everyday example, our words and our deeds.

Let us by our deeds no less than by our words tell them of that Christ who, being the serene and all-sufficient God, became, as it were, a common man among us out of His eternal tenderness and pity, having compassion upon us all, upon us common men. Let us tell them that He has come to rescue and redeem our common humanity, to solve our common problems, to show us the price and value of our lives, and all the priceless opportunities that lie about us in the world, about us common men.

Indeed, as we have said before, if we push the meaning of this term "common" a little farther, perhaps one might bring all mankind

within its compass and might say that we are all of us only this, in His vision, the best and the worst of us alike, only common and ordinary men. We may have genius to make a tinkle in the ears of the world; but in His ears our wit and our wisdom are all very foolish and shallow indeed, the prattle of babes. We may have wealth, station, power; but in His sight we wither like grass. We may even be prelates or princes wise or holy in men's esteem, but in His eyes we are but poor pitiful little ones, common men whom He came to rescue from a common ruin that would have swallowed us all.

So each one of us shall be saved by His mercy, not as great men, or rich, nor as poor or little, but merely as what we are—common men! It is our humanity that we take with us to Heaven; if we are not saved as common men, vain indeed will have been all the uncommon things we boasted of in this world!

It was this thought that made the great heart of St. Paul groan out, in the midst of his labors, "Lest perhaps having preached to others, I myself should become a castaway!"

The seer, the prophet, the apostle, under the robe of all these Heaven-sent dignities, there lived and breathed, there prayed and suffered only a common man, solicitous for his soul!

As we are to be saved as common men, so must we serve God, so may we save other men and bring them with ourselves to Heaven. The appeal of our human kindness, sincerity and love will win them over, our homely and familiar talk will sink conviction into their souls, the power of our everyday example will bring them to believe that Christian goodness is possible, will move them to own that it is sweet and lovely and holy, will make them yearn to bring it into their own hearts and lives. The grasp of our hands will cheer and reassure them; we shall win them by our common and familiar words and deeds, of brotherliness, faith, and love.

Such reflections as these have served to make great men humble, when they reflected how small and ordinary they must seem in the eyes of God. But they should have power, too, to stir up and hearten to heroic effort the man who knows that he is not

greatly gifted with power, talent and influence to aid his fellow-men.

Not one of us, however lowly and undistinguished, who dwells seriously on these thoughts should fail to find in them encouragement and cheer to take up the work which God has cut out for him, among the men and women who make up the circle of his little world, to enter boldly on his own especial field of apostleship. If we could only bring those great numbers of Catholic men and women, who form the noble ranks of the common faithful, to realize deeply their opportunities and their powers, how soon their valiant efforts could change the face of the earth!

For only think of the numbers, the influence, of all our countless multitudes of plain and simple Catholics throughout the world! They are everywhere; they speak to every one; every one is their acquaintance; every one is their friend. Wherever toilers or feasters or players are gathered together, wherever work is being done, or recreations are afoot, or men are talking to one another, in car or factory or office or club, the common

Catholic is there. He rubs shoulders with all men; he is rich among the rich and poor with the poor, simple with the simple and learned among the learned; in a word, he is, by his very multiplicity and variety and omnipresence what the great Apostle strove ever to be, "all things to all men." How endless, then, and how various are the opportunities of his apostleship! Where the priest may not enter unsuspected, he is already there a familiar and a friend. His common talk is listened to with interest and without suspicion; his testimony is accepted, his teaching will pass current as the word of a friend. Without suspicion, without prejudice, he can, if he be prudent and tactful, preach the saving truths of his Faith in a thousand places, where the word of a priest of God would be met only with anger, or distrust, or disdain.

If we only can enlist, somehow, the aid of the common man! If we can only awaken in him a sense of his high privileges and noble opportunities, and set him in the way of helping his fellow-men, what great good we shall gain for the Church, and therefore for the world!

Yet, let us say it again in sadness, the great pity is that most men who realize that they come under the category of common Christians, of ordinary Catholics, that they are in no wise distinguished from the great mass of the faithful, either in learning, or influence, or authority, or position, or power of any kind, are apt to be so very easily discouraged and lose heart for any effort to better the world. They go indeed, only too often, to a sad extreme of what one may call spiritual do-nothingness. Far from exercising any apostleship among their fellow-men, their only ambition seems to be to keep as passive and as quiet as possible in matters of religion, and to leave the whole burden of spreading the knowledge of the Faith, of fighting truth's battles, and upholding the honor of the Church "to those who are better fit"—by which they commonly mean the priests!

Others still, of the ordinary faithful, are bewildered when they are told that they have a mission or an apostleship to this poor, weak, wicked world! What should they do? Where shall they begin? Who will listen to them? Between these two attitudes of mind,

there are a hundred others, all the various shades of discouragement, bewilderment, indifference, and (shall we say it?) laziness too—which keep our ordinary Catholics from coming forward to take up the labors of this great apostleship. Now and again you do find one or another simple layman who has been touched by God's grace and stirred by some prudent counsel and suggestion, to try his hand at spreading the Faith. If such a one is wise, and tactful, and persistent what a great deal he can do! He grows surprised himself at his own accomplishment. He becomes a living proof of what we said in the beginning about the power of the common man. He penetrates where God's priest could never find admittance; he is heard and believed, trusted and followed by men who would resent and suspect the intrusion of any minister of religion whatsoever, in their lives.

But these zealous, enlightened, prudent apostles are still, alas, all too few among our common Catholic men and women. The great majority, with all their great powers unrealized and unused, are waiting, discour-

aged and obscure, for the suggestion and appeal which might launch them upon their labors for God and for His Church and for the world.

In conclusion, then, it is to you, dear Catholic reader, whoever or wherever you may be, that these thoughts should have a poignant and urgent appeal. You are one of that chosen people to whom Jesus Christ has given the charge of letting your light shine before men, that they may glorify your Father who is in Heaven. You are one of those to whom St. Peter's words are said, ringing down the ages: "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people: that you may declare His virtues who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." You, whoever you may be, are one of those everyday apostles to whom is entrusted for good or ill the soul's welfare of scores, perhaps of hundreds and thousands of your fellow-men.

The field of your labors for God lies all about you. It is the world you live in, the men, women, and children you meet every day in familiar intercourse, at home, at your

work, abroad. Their eyes are upon you. Their ears are listening for your teaching. You can not help moving, teaching, leading them, either for good or for evil. Be a consistent, whole-hearted, faithful Catholic, speak and act and think and love as your faith and your conscience bid you, and you lead them irresistibly toward the truth, toward God and Heaven. Speak to them tactfully and kindly of the Faith that is in you, and your holy example will give your words a weight they can not resist or gainsay. But lead a life like the rest of men, follow their foolish ways, dissemble your lofty principles, yield to hate and envy, and greed, and lust because "everybody does," and you quench a great light out of the world. You are a lesser Judas, a traitor-apostle. You preach to men, at least in action, that Christ's doctrine is only a lovely theory, His faith an amiable myth, His mission to men a pleasant and impracticable dream. You quench and smother, so far as in you lies, the flame that should kindle the world!

THE APOSTLESHIP OF ENCOURAGEMENT

NEW YEAR, following as it does so close upon the Christmas season, finds our hearts open and warm for all good resolves and thoughts of Christian charity. Christmas, which is above all the feast of love, has filled us so full with kindliness and good will that we look for some ready way of showing to our neighbor our friendliness and good feeling. Well, there is one way at our hand, easy, practical and fruitful. Let us spend a while thinking it over together, and we shall call it for short the Apostleship of Encouragement.

We mortals are all of us glad enough ourselves for any bit of helpful, honest encouragement that comes our way, and we like to have every one hearten us and cheer us on. As to heartening other folk, and cheering them on, that's another matter. We don't see our way to do it tactfully, or they might not value our encouragement if it were given, or it might seem an intrusion, or perhaps it

never even enters our heads that they stand in need of any help or cheer from us at all. These are, alas, the common attitudes of mind toward this important matter of lending hope and countenance to other men; these are the reasons why there is too little of this great good in the world.

If you go back a bit in your experience, and grow meditative about yourself and the people you have known, you will very shortly realize, I think, that you and they have suffered a great deal at certain portions of your life from mere, downright discouragement. You may not have been quite conscious at the time of what it was that leaded down your feet, or lay like a weight above your heart. You were young, perhaps, and great designs had been forming in your fervid mind of doing worthy deeds and greatly helping on your fellow-men. Possibly your dreams had not much weight and work-a-day substance to them, but they were evidence of a good will and a lofty purpose, precious things which, when well directed, do avail to uplift and purify the world.

But there came a day, perhaps it was after

you had tried some too ambitious flight and fallen rudely, when your great resolves suddenly faltered and flagged. You woke to a sorrowful and half despairing realization of your own scant equipment for anything really noble and great. You found out the height and the distance of those delectable mountains which had before seemed so easy and so near. And so, seeing no way before you, you bitterly cursed the mirage that had led you into this desert of discouragement, and perhaps you turned your back in sullen disillusionment on all the heroic aspirations and settled down to lead a humdrum life of easy mediocrity, like the greater part of the unheroic world.

Oh, if there had been some one there, some wise and patient and tender heart who could have rallied and reassured you and tided you over this first bitter stroke of withering discouragement! If some one had only been there to remind you that the greatest of men often failed miserably in beginnings, and that battles are only won with many bruises and blows! All you required was a little cheerful encouragement, a little

elasticity of spirit, and there would have been a new start with better plans and securer guidance along the upward grade. But, alas, no one spoke to any purpose, no one vouchsafed the tiny word of wise encouragement and cheer which you needed to help you over that perilous and critical pass, and so you are what you are, instead of being the noble thing you had meant and hoped and planned.

This manner of tragedy is very common in men's lives. Sometimes it is a purpose and effort toward merely temporal honor and service, that faints and fails for want of due encouragement. How many a lad who had hoped to be a doughty soldier or a mighty statesman has given up and meekly gone to keeping dusty ledgers, because he found no help in his necessity when his soul was sick and weary for the encouragement of a friend!

Over these merely temporal losses and calamities we need not grieve so much. Sometimes they are not really calamities or losses at all; for they turn a man's eyes from the things of time and set him gazing toward eternity. It is the spiritual and eternal losses

we must deplore, and how many of these, how very many indeed, come from a lack of due encouragement!

"We live by admiration, hope and love," cries Wordsworth in a famous poem, and to be sure a great part of our vigor, earnestness and courage in entering on nobler lives and living up to better resolutions comes from the warm, bright hopes we cherish, and our glowing anticipations of success to be. This is all natural and proper and good. It is so that God made us and it is so, too, that intelligent beings, who act for an end, must cheer themselves and be cheered on past the trials and miseries that wait like lions in the way. Holy contemplatives have even loved to think that the angel who came to comfort Our Lord after His agony was sent to bring vividly before His human soul the immense and everlasting joy and glory He was to win by His depths of suffering and humiliation. If this is true, as they have lovingly imagined, if He, the All-sufficient, the All-strong, vouchsafed to let a creature of His will minister to Him, and encourage and console Him, is it any wonder that we, who

are pitifully weak and dependent, should sometimes need the cheer and encouragement of our fellow-men to help us on through our small agonies?

Our neighbor's need in his discouragement is, then, it is clear, our own golden opportunity. It opens to us an easy and a glorious apostleship which the simplest and the lowliest of us all may practise very effectively, and which tactfully and lovingly pursued, will make us true ministering angels to our fellow-men. How thick the opportunities for this blessed apostleship lie round about us all!

First of all let us look around us in our own homes, at our own firesides, and see whether some precious occasions for it are not waiting ready to our hand. It may be, for instance, that we have long been trying to influence for good some brother or sister of ours, some near relative or intimate friend.

Perhaps we may fancy to ourselves that we have done everything that flesh and blood can do, to work out our beneficent designs. We have suggested, advised, exhorted, admonished, even scolded, been friendly and

severe by turns, but all to no avail. We have tried the direct ways and the round-about ways, have used ingenuity and bluntness and finesse and subtlety and persuasion, all the loving means and all the hard ones, but still to no avail! Now let us ask ourselves one most weighty question more. Have we, have we ever, tried true and genuine encouragement? To get any one to make a real effort toward bettering himself, is it not clear that one of the very first requisites is to get him to believe strongly and hope vividly that he can somehow be a better man? This seems a truism, perhaps, but it is often overlooked by sage admonitors. We are too likely to forget, in our superior way, that it is mere downright discouragement and dispiritedness about themselves and their own possibilities of reform which keeps many, many poor sinners groveling in their sin. Once get a man into a hopeful, eager spirit with himself, keen and sanguine about his own chances of improvement, and you have given him an immense lift along the paths of righteousness and perfection.

Try once more, then, with these friends of

yours, and try this time with the gentle, irresistible means of cordial and tactful encouragement. Cordial and tactful—we may well dwell a while on these two words, for they hold in themselves the essence of true encouraging. It must be cordial, full of heart. It must spring from no other wish, desire or impulse than genuine love. Love, and unselfish, Christian, patient, generous love, must be its well-spring, its motive and inspiration. Then it will not intrude nor offend nor defeat its own purpose by ill-concealed arrogance or assumed superiority. It will not wound instead of healing, nor weary instead of giving cheer. Secondly, it must be tactful; not intrusive, nor ill-timed nor insistent, nor self-important nor importunate, all of which ugly things spring from, and smell of, the musty soil of selfishness.

Now that we are speaking of the things that encouragement does not mean, let us put in just one word of caution more. Encouragement does not mean flattery nor insincere approval, nor even what is generally known as praise. To praise a man to his face, even to flatter him, is indeed a sort

of encouragement, but it is too often not a good sort at all. It is a great deal like those narcotic stimulants, that can indeed heighten the heart and screw up the courage for a while, but soon fail and leave a sense of weariness and languor and a fiercer craving after more of the same unhealthy stimulus. The encouragement we speak of is sensible, homely and moderate, sincere, and true, and therefore effective and enduring. If it praises, it praises modestly and truly, choosing rather to praise the deed than the man who does it, not drawing invidious comparisons. It consists in heartening our brother, bringing him with word and deed to the true and healthy optimism which is patient of toil and failure, because by God's help it trusts in victory at the end. Life as God sees it is always encouraging—a very field of glorious opportunities, and therefore true Christian encouragement is making the disheartened and weary see the world through the ever-cheerful eyes of its Creator and its Lord.

"But if one has to be so careful and circumspect about it, it might be a great deal better not to try to encourage other folks at all!"

Oh, no, dear interlocutor, it is always better to try! To twist a bit the saying of St. Francis de Sales, it is better by far to encourage with imperfection than not to encourage at all. With good will and a little prudent thinking over what we have done, we shall soon come to have some skill in this noble art of encouragement. What a day that will be, when at our poor words and looks we see cheeks flush and eyes brighten with noble energy and courage, where there was before only dull down-heartedness and a sort of gloomy half-despair!

If we think that we are not any way fitted to exercise this great apostleship, we should make it a subject of our prayers to God and beg Him to give us the heart and the tact and the will to carry the work along all through our lives. For in all the range of fruitful apostleships there are few more blessed than this.

It would be pleasant to descend to many details and reflect a while on some particular occasions for this Apostleship of Encouragement, which come in the way of nearly all of us some time or other during our lives. There are the young folk—who seem so

abundantly blessed already with life, spirits and hope, that many an elder man or woman thinks sighingly that they at least are in very little need of encouragement. But it is not true. It is the young who need encouragement most, perhaps, of all; for they are new to themselves and to the world. They have no memories of deeds well done to cheer and hearten them and make them believe a little in their own capacity and powers. They have not settled station and footing among men to give them strength. They need some kindly voice, some friendly eye to reassure and stir them to confidence and hope. A word of encouragement, a little word of appreciation, then, at the critical time in their young fortunes may have a world of meaning and value in their eyes, may make them your debtors for life, and enshrine you in their loving memories through all the changes of after years.

Have the old no need of encouragement? Be sure they have! Every one has, who is plodding along through this world. It is true that their discouragements are likely to be quite different from those which chill and

depress the mercurial heart of youth. They suffer from weariness, disillusionment and regret. They can no longer stir themselves to fresh endeavors and new virtues and holiness, by thinking of the years to be; for with them there are no years to be. All their long days are spread behind them! And they look back upon past years with uneasiness and pain. The opportunities they wasted, the good deeds they have left undone and the evil they have never atoned for, rise up and haunt them now, so that they, too, like the young (though for different reasons), often stand sorely in need of encouragement and cheer.

The middle-aged stand on the great divide of life facing the westering sun, midway betwixt youth and old age, and the discouragement of both those times of life assails them by turns, and so they are often in need of some cheer and heartening too. To put it all in a word, most of the world about us —and particularly when it comes to a question of earnest and exceptional efforts toward greater holiness and virtue, is plodding along in a more or less chronic state of mild dis-

couragement. Many a careless-seeming and loose-living man is really deeply concerned down in his own heart about his spiritual welfare and anxious, in a vague and indefinite sort of way, to be a better fellow and rise out of his sin. What keeps him back from making some definite effort to improve is a despondent feeling that all he can do will be of small avail. Religion seems to him a sombre thing, breathing only punishment and gloom. To show him the cheerful and consoling side of Christ's sweet message is to lift him up and urge him on most efficaciously to better things.

Let us set ourselves, then, steadfastly, prudently and tenderly to take up this holy apostleship of cheering on our fellow-men in the ways of virtuous effort. Let us join the ranks of those noble hearts, alas too few, whose minds are forever busy in conjuring up and putting to test ingenious and tender ways to help and cheer along their neighbor in the sometimes steep and arduous ways of God's service and love.

There is one such a man hid away in a large city of this land of ours whose story

may well conclude our thoughts on the Apostleship of Encouragement. He is an old man now in years and experience. Men say that he himself in his younger days was the victim of a great discouragement which nearly ruined him, but by a great effort and by God's grace he overcame the sour poison in his veins and turned it into sweetness. Now his doorstep is worn by the feet of many men and women, young men and women for the most part, who have learned the way to that humble threshold as to a door to cheeriness and hope. One tells the other—no man knows how the good word passes—but there they come. And how he cheers and heartens them, that simple little old man! He is stricken now by a lingering malady. He sits all day in an old arm-chair which his faithful man wheels around to keep it in the sunshine. But for all the twinges of pain that rack him, there is always a flute-like quality to his voice that rings like cheerful music, there is a contagious merriment in his eye that turns the blue devils out of windows and tunes up the cockles of the heart like generous wine. How much good this old

man does I should not like to try to set down. How far his Apostleship of Encouragement and Cheer has reached out into the world no one on earth can guess. But there he sits day in and day out, dispensing spiritual sunshine. Some of his friends suspect (but I think no one has ever dared to ask him), that a great deal of that encouraging and sympathetic temper of his is due to a resolution (an agonized and awful resolution it must have been) taken while he was yet sore and quivering from that great discouragement of his early years, that he would never let a chance go by to hearten and inspire the low-spirited and the timid by generous sympathy. How much happier and holier the world would soon become if every one who has fallen victim to discouragement himself would straightway take a similar resolution!

For encouragement—and this reflection shall be our last—is a great deal like mercy in the poet's saying: "It blesses him who gives and him who takes." To be truly encouraging one must keep his own soul in an atmosphere of cheery and healthy optimism. To exorcise the imp of dejection from an-

other, one must first shake free from his dark and ugly sway one's self.

It is a very common counsel, when we are sad, to go and try to cheer some other mourner. Why not turn the same shrewd advice to our present matter and shake off our own discouragement if need be, by trying to encourage some one else? What a pleasant and holy place the world would be if every one set himself manfully to work to encourage goodness and virtue in all his neighbors! No more sorry looks and envious glances. No more chilling indifference or carping criticism or odious backbiting or sneering opposition to good and virtuous deeds. But everywhere, on all hands, a sunny, cheerful good-will, and charity that warms the heart, and makes virtue, goodness, and brave endeavor a hundred times easier, more sturdy and effective. A general atmosphere, in a word, of holy and Christian charity, for after all true charity, truly understood, always spells encouragement.

THE POWER OF PRAISE

FROM the Apostleship of Encouragement one passes on very naturally to think of the Apostleship of Praise. "Why," I think I hear some one say, "aren't they quite the same thing?" No, not quite the same, although their spheres do overlap in many places. For one may encourage a person without praising him, though on the other hand, as we shall see, it is hardly possible to praise in the way we mean, without at the same time giving some encouragement.

To begin with, let us hedge in our field a little. For there is praise and praise, and we must not take too wide a stint to plow out of such an expansive subject.

To praise, then, is in general to express our approval and commendation of a person or a thing. So much even the dictionary can tell us. But how many kinds and shades and subdivisions there are in praise! First of all, there is praise honest and sincere, and praise hollow, insincere and of the false lips merely. This last we mention only to fling it far

aside, for it does no good to giver or to taker, but only evil. Then there is the hearty, whole-souled praise, which carries a conviction of our sincerity, and faint, grudging, qualified praise, such as we speak of in the good old saying about "damning with faint praise." Again, there is injudicious praise, intemperate and effusive, which spoils the truth of one saying by the exaggeration and fulsome flattery of the next; and there is timely, tactful, refined and temperate praise, which comes easily and modestly from a sincere and unselfish heart. Last of all, and most important for our purpose, is another division—sharper and more easily recognizable perhaps than any of the preceding kinds—between "praising one to his face," as we say, or in other words, between the praise we address to some one who is present and is listening to us—and praising the absent, or praising some quality or mode of action, which is a very different sort of praise indeed.

When and where it is prudent to praise a man to his face, how we should go about it, and with whom, and under what conditions, and whether it is likely to do the one we

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praise more good or harm, these are all questions that for the present we leave to each one's own wit and prudence to answer, for the subject does not concern us here. It is about the second sort of praise that we mean to think and argue at this present writing—to wit, the praise we give to absent persons, or to modes of action, or to virtues and achievements, and the influence which that praise has upon ourselves and upon our fellow-men.

It is clear that we are all concerned with the practical issues of this discussion. Are we not all of us perpetually at it, praising or dispraising men, women, and things, during most of our waking hours? Scarcely a topic enters into our speech, but our personal attitude of praise or blame toward it, of commendation or disapproval slips from us unawares. Even though we had as lief keep our personal attitude in the dark of our own minds, it will not stay hid, but slips between our lips, or sparkles from our eyes, or peeps from the very wrinkles and publishes itself abroad whether we will or no. If, then, our praise and our dispraise have any influence

on other men, we must do a great deal of good or a great deal of harm with it, as we go on about our business, through our long lives in this watchful and listening world!

That our praise, our commendation and approval of other persons and of their acts and virtues, does have an influence both on ourselves and on other men, who can doubt for a moment? Praise and its opposite, blame, have a tremendous moral power in forming ideals and attitudes and opinions and points of view. All of us, whether we like it or no, are moved by other men's authority, and depend on their judgment and lean upon their estimate of the value of things. What they praise, we are apt to esteem more highly; what they blame, is lessened in our sight. If they are contemptuous or indifferent, we are very likely to be inclined to contempt or indifference too.

As other men move us by their expressions of blame or praise, so do we in our turn influence and sway the thoughts of other men. We can not express our admiration of a person or a thing, but they are unconsciously inclined to value it more highly; if we depre-

ciate or blame, we set their minds to censuring or fault-finding too.

We may perhaps here object to ourselves that we are quite too insignificant and of too slight importance for our praise or blame to have all the weight with men that has been just described. But our importance, or want of it, merely changes the reach and power of our praise. That we are obscure does not take away our influence, it merely confines it to a narrower circle. Within that circle, where we are known and loved, our praise or blame has still its own moral power, inevitable and strong.

We may convince ourselves of this very easily by taking the extreme example of a little child. Who could be more insignificant, of less authority and importance, than yonder little one of six or seven years? His elders listen to his prattled praise or blame with an amused indulgence that does not take account at all of his wee judgment in fixing the values of things. But see him among his little playfellows—his praise or blame is very weighty there! If he likes a toy or a game, if he dislikes a teacher, or thinks a lesson dull

and hard, he can mightily affect the public sentiment of the tiny republic of his equals which hears his puny voice. So it is with us grown-up children, in our way. Each one of us has likewise his certain circle, be it great or small, which listens with ready sympathy to his praise or blame, and molds unconsciously its estimates upon his own.

Is it not clear, then, how easily we may make our praise and our blame subserve the end of helping other men? To put it simply, the principle is this: What we praise, if we have influence with others, they will like and admire and desire to have some part in; and what we blame, or criticise, or condemn, will be cheapened and lessened in their eyes.

See what a power this gives us, and what a responsibility. Our casual remarks, our praises and criticisms thrown off a hundred times a day, in chance encounters or occasional conversations, have all our lives been molding, altering, deepening the ideals and convictions of our fellow-men. Have we shown our esteem of heavenly and godly ways of living? Our hearers are the better for it. Did we base our praise or blame on

mere worldly or human standards of value? We have done our part to lower their standards, their ideals, to our own. Hence it is, mark you, that close friends come in time to have common ways of judging, valuing and esteeming those things of which they speak to one another in praise or blame. Hence, too, the fearful power of that bloody tyrant called "Human Respect," which is nothing else indeed than our respect for and fear of the chorus of human praise or blame.

Perhaps this power of praise or of blame, its influence to mold and form ideals and set desires afire, is nowhere greater than with the little ones. Children are mightily moved, beyond what most of us dream, by what they hear their elders praising or blaming. They have a marvelous power, almost an intuition, for catching the opinions and standards of the "grown-ups" and for weaving them into their baby dreams and play. Preach to them as you will of being good and honest and sincere and pious, if they catch from your daily praise and blame that you really esteem other qualities far more than these, that you esteem Mr. and Mrs. Wealthy, who are fash-

ionable people, far more than Mr. and Mrs. Poor, who are simple, pious folk; that you think much more highly of Miss Evelyn Dress, who is socially exclusive, than of Miss Anna Plain, who is full of charitable works and does a great deal for the poor, do you think your abstract sermons and advice will hold out any bait to their youthful fancies? Will they be dreaming of growing up to be "good" and "pious" and "dutiful," or will they be yearning to grow worthy in time of such admiring words as they hear Papa and Mamma give to Mrs. Wealthy and to Evelyn Dress? Oh, how long we remember, and how steadily we pursue the things we heard praised and commended when no one thought we were by, the praises which we drank in, unsuspecting and unsuspected, with all the thirst and fervor of our childish hearts!

And now, how shall we turn this great moral power to subserve the purposes of an apostleship? First of all, by making our own hearts firm and true and sound as to what we should blame and what we should praise. For the world at large, this would be a desperate counsel and a disheartening

beginning—how should the unbeliever know what justly to praise or blame? It is too often all one to him—truth and falsehood, good or evil. What he likes or dislikes must be the present standard of his praise or blame; indeed, vague as his convictions are, he should dare scarcely blame at all.

But the Catholic is saved this vagueness and confusion as to the standards of good and evil; his opinion and attitude on a whole range of subjects, on the deepest issues of life, are settled forever by the one fact of his whole-hearted allegiance to the Church. As a loyal Catholic, there is but one attitude for him, and he has only to be well-instructed, consistent, and sturdy in his Catholic principles to praise well and blame well on the weightiest subjects that can arise.

Let us then dare and bear to shape our praise and blame, all our candid estimates of men and things, upon the solid and consistent ground of Catholic principle. Let us dare to do it; for however convinced we may be of the truth and soundness of our Catholic Faith, we shall often be sorely tempted to forsake those true and unpopular standards,

and to conform to the false but popular standards of the world. How sad it is—how queer it must seem, even to the non-believer, when he reflects upon it—that a Catholic should judge of and estimate men and things by the mere worldly values of time and of this life, when by his profession of Catholicity he should weigh them by the standards of Heaven and of eternity! What a huge incongruity: to profess the doctrine of the Crucified, who came to overcome the world, and yet forever to have upon one's lips worldly maxims, worldly estimates, lauds of money-getting for its own sake, talk of pleasure-having for its own sake, nay, even praise of prosperous scoundrels, of skilful evil-doers who are the very foes and executioners of the Crucified!

Then, too, we must bear to praise and blame according to our Catholic faith and principles. And this means a distinct and long-continued struggle against our own evil leanings toward the falsely-seeming good things, the standards and desires of the flesh and of the world. To praise and blame discreetly we must go counter to our own lower

inclinations. To estimate and approve all things according to the value they have in God's eyes, this is to go squarely against all that is ungodly in us, to conquer our own baser selves which yearn and crave to praise the good things of this world.

Yet this only points to another good which comes of the apostleship of worthy praise. For it is a blessed thing for us to put the world's standards by, and look up manfully towards the eternal truths. If we could but grow accustomed to looking up at them and framing our ideas by them, how much more consistent, and sensible, and Christian our thoughts and our actions would come to be! We would not then be dwelling on money and fashion, on clothes or goods or business or pleasure or barter or trade, as though these were man's last end and aim!

If we praise well, we shall come by degrees to love well, and then to act well. For what we praise we grow to love, and we act by what we love. So that if we would set ourselves manfully to praise honesty and honor, unselfish and lofty ways of living, faith, charity, gentleness, obedience, and holy

deeds, and all the natural and supernatural virtues, we should come in time to love, and then to be these things. If we praised men because they are staunch Catholics, because they bring up their children carefully in God's fear and love, because they are of sterling principle, and faithful in their way of life, we should, if we were sincere, soon come to be so too.

There is another advantage in this same practice of worthy praise, to wit, that by commending noble Catholic and honorable ways of living, we in some way commit ourselves to attempt them ourselves. For every man likes to appear, and to be, consistent. If we have the courage to praise what is worthy we gain heart to attempt to do it. If we find ourselves keeping company with high ideals, we shall begin to itch a bit to put them into action. If we have the good sense to speak consistently with our Catholic faith and principle, we shall grow more ashamed of going counter to them in our deeds.

There are one or two practical applications of the truths we have been dwelling on which it would be too bad to leave unnoticed. One

of these has to do with the way Catholics speak of other Catholics, or of Catholic enterprises and Societies, or of Catholic ecclesiastics and the rulers of the Church. It is a sad thing to say, but a spirit is abroad nowadays to speak rather disparagingly of things Catholic, merely from a desire, it may be, of standing well with the world, or of showing our own broad-mindedness; or perhaps, of giving other folks an idea that we are rather above the common run of the faithful, and not to be classed with the poor, ordinary Catholics one sees in such numbers in church!

Leaving aside the many reasons drawn from loyalty and reverence and charity and consistency and good feeling, which rise up to condemn this unworthy attitude of mind, how unwise and injurious it is when we look at it from the viewpoint of its effect on the non-Catholics around us! They expect that we, who pledge our whole faith and stake all our hopes of life eternal on the truth, the nobleness and the heavenly beauty of Catholic teaching, should be filled with reverence and esteem for all that belongs to or is associated with our holy faith. They realize

that we are the natural defenders and advocates of all things Catholic. How shocked and disillusioned and repelled they must be to find us speaking in a depreciating way of our brothers in the cause of Christ, of our pastors, who bear His authority, of the persons and things which are most intimately associated with His Church, His spiritual Kingdom in this world!

How sternly we should crush out in ourselves this mean and carping spirit; how steadily we should urge ourselves to lean towards praise and encouragement whenever there is question of Catholics or of Catholic enterprise! No need of false praise, nor of fulsome adulation; for these things are never helpful nor good. If we have clear eyes and an unenvious heart, we shall always find enough and to spare in the Catholic world about us, to furnish us many an occasion for hearty and merited commendation.

Again, a failing of ours which must often hurt and scandalize the well-disposed non-Catholic is that queer tendency we have to set up as representative Catholics men who are poor types indeed of what the Church

desires in her sons. Because a man owns to the name of Catholic, and has besides won place and esteem in the world, by his profession, it may be, or his fortune or his wits, we are often all too ready to trumpet him abroad as a great Catholic citizen and point to him with pride as a bright example of his kind. What must the non-believer think, once more, when he knows quite well that this man's whole claim to distinction and esteem rests upon his possession of the good things of this world; that he is only good and great, if so at all, from a worldly standpoint, and that if he be viewed from a sound Catholic viewpoint and weighed in the balance of Catholic principle, he is one of the least worthy and estimable of the Church's sons? "And this is the manner of man," the non-Catholic will say to himself, "whom these Catholics set up as their representative, their boast and their pride! God save the mark! They are the most inconsistent people on earth. They praise unworldliness, and honor this shameless worldling; they speak of piety, and extol this notorious neglecter of his religious duties; they prate of honesty

and sober living, and then join hands with this successful rogue! I will have none of them; they can not believe the noble things they say!" Let us be careful, very circumspect and careful, about whom, or what we set aloft as representative of our Catholic principles! We are watched, and we are judged by a keen-sighted, shrewdly-suspicious and not over-friendly world!

We have reached the limits we had set ourselves, and have scarcely yet broken the surface of this vast subject of the power of praise. But what we have said will have fulfilled its purpose if it serves only to make us realize how great and how far-reaching is the influence which our blame or our commendation wields on the minds of other men.

We walk through the world, quite carelessly it may be, speaking out our minds, proclaiming our opinions, giving forth our standards, little conscious all the while of how much our light words may mean in the ears of our fellows. Those words we utter —the praise, the criticism, the censure and the blame—go abroad into other minds and hearts, and are caught up and repeated and

multiplied like ripples in still water, until the thoughts of a whole multitude of men and women and children are wrought upon, their standards raised or lowered, their emulation and their desire stirred up and fired for weal or woe. How far each easy, careless speech of ours has been borne abroad and swayed men's minds and fortunes, who but God can tell? Such a mighty power for good or for evil lies hid in the tiny organ we call our tongue!

OUR TALK IN BUSINESS

We sometimes say that professional men are liable to grow abstracted and over-engrossed in their own especial line. If we observe a bit more closely, I think we shall find that it is the man of business who becomes most deeply wrapped up in the affairs of his traffic and his gain. Listen to the talk on the street cars some fine morning when men's tongues are loosened by the weather or the time of year, and see for yourself what makes the chief matter of their casual talk.

The professional man will speak of many things quite foreign to his specialty, of current happenings in this or other lands, of the last book, or the latest rumor of war. But the business man, in nine cases out of ten, is rattling on either about politics, which is a sort of secondary business with him, or about his beloved trade. What he has bought or sold or is just about buying or selling, the profits he has made or is expecting, the chances of markets, the changes in supply

and demand—you may hear all these things discussed to no end with the greatest gusto, with never a word of any alien topic whatsoever thrown in on either side to relieve the monotony of the talk of shop.

This perpetual abstraction and absorption in matters of dollars and cents is, to put it mildly, no very ennobling thing for the mind and heart. A man must live, to be sure, and he must have money to live; but to be forever busy with thoughts of money is not very much more elevating than to be always busy with thoughts of food. Even from the low standpoint of one's own mental saneness and efficiency, then, it would be a very useful thing to make some practical reflections on the subject of the Apostleship of Speech in Business Life.

However, there are other motives for dwelling on the subject, which are more weighty than this. To begin with, it is sometimes rather pointedly questioned nowadays whether our Catholic business men are the mighty instruments for spreading their holy faith that one might expect them to be from their numbers and their general influence.

When Our Lord said that His followers should be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, He did not mean, of course, that we were all to preach His gospel from the house-tops, but it is quite certain that He did mean that every one was to do his share in spreading the good tidings among men. Suppose that a Catholic spends ten, twenty or fifty years of his life in the closest kind of daily and hourly contact with all sorts and conditions of men and that at the end of that long time of constant opportunity he can not point to any deliberate or consistent work for the spreading abroad of the truth of Christ, can that man by any stretching of the meaning of words be properly said to have discharged his Christian duty of being the salt of the earth and the light of the world?

At this point of our reflections I seem to hear some hard-headed man of business break in upon me with an emphatic objection: "Any one who would speak of business life as a time of constant opportunity for spreading Catholic truth can not be very familiar with what he is talking about.

Why, a business man would laugh at you if you were to begin that sort of thing. An office or a store is the last place on earth to do any missionary work in the way of spreading Catholic doctrine. The Apostleship of Speech is all very well at home, in social life, or even in professional life, if you will, but it is out of place altogether in the busy and distracted day of the average business man."

Let us go over the ground a bit together, my dear objector, and see whether all opportunities are wanting even in the busy haunts of trade. First of all, there is the negative side of the picture to be looked at, for we accomplish nearly as much good at times by the things we refrain from as by the things we do. Whether he likes it or not, the man who professes to be a Catholic is always under scrutiny. Men differ in many things, but for the most part they agree in this, that they despise a hypocrite and resent a man's making profession of a high and holy creed, and then acting and speaking no better than the common run. And so they keep a sharper watch on Catholics (who, as they know perfectly well, profess the hardest and loftiest

religion in the world) to see if they make at least some decent effort to live up to their exalted principles. This thought opens up to us at once a rich and varied field for reflection, which, of course, we shall only have time to travel over very briefly.

It goes without saying, to begin with, that a Catholic man's speech should be utterly pure from any taint of that monstrous abuse of man's faculty of speech which we call profanity. To hear even a pagan making free with the holiest words in our language, to lend a little emphasis to his worthless remarks, is dreadful enough, even though we may offer for him the sorry excuse that he does not realize the evil thing he is doing. But to hear a Catholic employing in light and ribald jest the sacred names he learned to reverence at his mother's knee is melancholy and shameful in the extreme.

There are, however, more subtle and insidious ways than this of giving scandal in our talk, which the Apostleship of Speech will make an earnest Catholic avoid. One of these, and that by no means the least dangerous and harmful, is the way we are liable

to fall into of making free with another man's good name. In this age of unlicensed speech many folk seem almost to have lost the sense of right and wrong in dealing with their neighbor's reputation. They speak quite freely of his faults and failings, they even publish his hidden sins. Nothing is more easy to acquire than this fatal habit of making free with other people's good name, but how little most men realize the sinister consequences of their fluent slander! How little they think of the reparation they are bound to make for the good repute they have unjustly stolen, and for the scandal they have given by their loose and libelous speech.

The average half pagan or whole pagan of the day may again offer in excuse of this evil habit of calumny and slander the slim defense that the evil of his ways has not been pointed out to him with all the clearness and force of Christ's divine teaching, but only in the vaguer warnings of the natural law. But how can we Catholics justify ourselves—who have heard from the incarnate God Himself such words as these: "Thou shalt not bear false witness;" "Judge not lest ye be

judged;" "If ye did it to the least of these, My brethren, you did it unto Me"?

Yet in the off-hand familiarity of the office or the store we may find many an occasion to fall into this abominable habit of uncharitable talk. We are abstracted, worried, or tired, and our mind and our tongue both crave a bit of ready, interesting speech. Nothing easier in the world than to talk of persons whom we know! Nothing nearer, alas, to our poor lips than a morsel of acrimonious criticism, or an unsavory rumor about some one of our acquaintance! So we say the word or two to our neighbor, and he or she takes up the strain, and perhaps even the topic becomes general, as each one adds a bit of fretful or unkind comment of his own. Then we go back to work, feeling refreshed, it may be, at having got rid of so much rancor; but we little realize the evil we have done. The chances are that in those few moments we have done our neighbor a serious, maybe an irreparable wrong. We have planted the fruitful seeds of aversion and suspicion in our hearers' hearts. The memory of our words and even of the occa-

sion that called them forth may die away from their minds. The very manner of our disparaging and calumnious speech may vanish from their thoughts. But when hereafter the name of the person we spoke ill of comes to their ears, the lingering prejudice born of our unkind talk will rise up, and they will dislike and distrust him. Now, what is the keen, observant man of business likely to think of men who profess a creed of the tenderest charity and good will towards all of God's children and yet soil their lips with these vile calumnies?

Another sort of talk which the Catholic man or woman in business should be solicitous to avoid is what one might call for short a sort of lip-worship of Mammon. To hear some business men of the day, one would think that the sole person to be admired is the successful money-getter, and that the last end of mankind is to gather worldly gear. They speak of wealthy men with bated breath, they praise the wiles of the unscrupulous financier with an approving and an envying air; you gather from their ordinary talk that in their eyes the happy man

is he who can keep his stealings well beyond the purview of the law. Even these worshipers of sharp dealing will hardly be much edified, I think, to find the Catholic men and women of their acquaintance joining in their loose views of the seventh commandment. They know well enough that in our system of belief goods and gold are only a means towards the heavenly and everlasting kingdom, and not an end to be pursued at the cost of body and soul. They know, too, quite well that a Catholic is bound to repent and to give back his ill-gotten gains before he can validly receive the Sacrament of Penance. What must they think, then, when they hear us speak the same loose and worldly language with themselves?

Another fault which we should dwell on a bit (though our catalogue is rather long already) is the way, alas too common, in which some Catholics speak of persons and of things pertaining to their Church and their Faith. Here, again, we must try to realize the marked difference between ourselves and the followers of all other creeds. In other creeds it has come at last to this, that men

look upon their ministers as pretty much on the same plane as themselves, appointed by merely human authority and governing and teaching with that influence only which each one's talents and good qualities can claim. Every one knows quite well that here, as in so many other points, the Catholic belief is altogether different. We profess that, however humble the talents of our priests may be, and whatever their personal character, we are bound to see in each of them the ambassador and vicegerent of God, who has put them where they are. Any insult we offer to them in their priestly office is offered to the very dignity and holiness with which they have been endowed by God. How strangely inconsistent, then, it must seem to those without the fold to hear us discussing and criticizing our pastors!

Even though we were to do or say nothing positive and definite upon the subject of our Catholic faith, but were to content ourselves with avoiding the evils and abuses we have been pointing out, we should have accomplished a great deal in the way of a true apostleship. For the world at large, used as

it is to hear all manner of slander and criticism and the common malice and uncharitableness which make up so much of the speech of men, will be struck with wonder at the spectacle of a man or woman whose talk is quite innocent of all offense, and will be moved by that rare and singular effect to esteem and inquire into our faith, which is the motive of so much self-restraint and careful reverence for the laws of God. Thus, even though we should seem to have but little time or opportunity for anything like an apostleship during the full days of business, here is at least one way in which we may all become apostles, by never doing or saying anything unworthy of our Catholic principles, by making an effort to attend at least to the negative side of the Apostleship of Speech.

WEARING A CATHOLIC FACE

In our last paper we dwelt in some detail upon what we called the negative side of the Apostleship of Speech in business: the ways in which one may aid the Church's cause among men, by keeping one's self clear of certain prevalent and common sins and abuses of speech. There remains great matter for useful observation on the positive side of that self-same subject, to which we shall address ourselves in these present pages. In the previous paper we put ourselves the question, first of all, whether such an apostleship has any place in the hurry and flurry of business life, and as the speediest and most effective way of answering this pertinent inquiry, let us plunge at once into a discussion of some of the practical ways in which ordinary Catholic men or women, in shop or office or factory, may help by their daily speech to spread the Kingdom of God on earth.

Our first suggestion shall be a practical and momentous one of wide and various application, and with a bearing not only on

this present matter of daily speech (which is, after all, only one, though perhaps the chief one, of our ways of manifesting our thoughts and character), but on all our dealings with our fellow-men. And the suggestion is this: "Let us begin by all of us, and always, putting on a Catholic face before the world!" A short sentence and easily written—but in need of how much qualifying and explanation!

What do we mean by putting on a Catholic face before the world! We do not mean that we should be arrogant, or intolerant, or pugnacious about being Catholics; nor that we should throw it into our neighbor's teeth, nor drag our Catholicity forth at unseasonable times, to be a rag of controversy, or a provocation to our non-Catholic fellows; nor even that we should be talking of our Catholicity as an attribute or quality of ourselves, as though it were a great credit to us that we are Catholics, with the mild and obvious implication to all dissenters that it is a great shame and pity to them that they are not. All these ways of acting, and many others which savor of the same arrogance, selfish-

ness and personal vanity, may, by some stretch of language, be called putting on a "Catholic" face—but not such a Catholic face as our saying recommends us. We mean a very different sort of face, indeed. For all these ways of acting only advertise the selfish and partial viewpoint that Catholicity belongs to us.

The attitude we mean to recommend is quite the converse one, that we, heart, mind, body, and soul, and all of us, belong to Catholicity! The spirit which we should have is quiet, modest, tactful and unintruding. It is as gentle as it is fearless, as kind and persuasive as it is uncompromising, where there is question of principle or truth. The man or woman who puts on this sort of a Catholic face goes through the world professing his faith in every daily action, because he or she is known by every acquaintance to be a sturdy, prudent, and staunch believer in and defender of the Holy Catholic Church.

To convey this impression, and to let every one know quite plainly that we are, first and foremost, Catholics in heart and soul, no

great parade nor forced endeavor is required. What is necessary is a deep and true and unreserved interior loyalty to the Church, and to her doctrines and her rulers, and a firm, modest and consistent way of acting along the lines of our principles and our beliefs. There is something in the wholesome moral atmosphere which a true-hearted Catholic bears about him, which has a solemn eloquence to proclaim his faith to his fellow-men. And the business man, or clerk, or shop-girl, or factory-hand, or the servant in a private home who keeps this attitude of quiet, earnest and determined Catholic spirit and principle will need to make use of few formal proclamations to announce to every one with whom he or she has any dealings that here is a practical and sincere Catholic, prepared and determined to do whatever that great and holy name implies and requires.

If we carry into our daily life of business such a Catholic face, such a Catholic attitude and bearing of body and soul as we have outlined here, our work of the Apostleship of Speech will be half accomplished already. For, as we have noted before, one speaks by

actions, by bearing, character, and manners, much louder and more eloquently sometimes than by any mere noise of words. And without the speech of action the speech of words is mostly vain and ineffective; for as compared with the latter, as all men realize, the former kind of speech is incomparably more certain, earnest, and sincere.

There are some further consequences of this "wearing a Catholic face" in our business life that have an even more direct bearing upon our present subject, and hence invite us to a more detailed consideration. To wear such a character before the world tends to make earnest men come to us of their own accord, to inquire about our Holy Faith. We do not realize, I am afraid, those of us who are busied all day long with the clatter and clink of dollars and cents on the dusty counters of trade, how weary, lonely, and starving the souls of many even of our prosperous and well-fed fellows are for the bread which Christ came to break to the children of men, for the living water which He alone could offer to the parched lips of an eager and thirsty world.

In the midst of their material success, their lust for gain and their eagerness for the ventures and excitements of business life, most men have vacant moments and weary stretches of emptiness and longing. Something within their bosoms tells them that they were, after all, not made only for the present and perishable world. Something higher and nobler in them stirs restlessly and craves for the Infinite and the Eternal, and they look about with longing and uneasy eyes for some guide, some hint, some token, some finger-post to set them on the path toward God and Heaven. They yearn for some clue out of their labyrinth of temporal affairs into the pure air of God's spiritual dominion, into the kingdom of the spirit, which somehow, somewhere, He must have set up in this world. It is in those better moments that there shines forth the brightest opportunity to save and purify and strengthen these fellow-men or women of yours by pointing them the way into that Church which has the clue to all their questions, the balm for all their restless ills and cares.

If their wandering eyes do not see any

guide out of their empty longings, any deliverer to point out the way to better things, their happy hour will pass. The dust and fog of earthly concerns will close once more around their spirit, the Heaven-sent longing fade away, and all their energies will sink down and become engrossed once more in the sordid interests of this present life. But if they have seen in you this sterling Catholic spirit of which we speak, then in their moments of spiritual longing your face will rise up before them as the face of one who has some holy clue to the weary riddles of life, they will come to you—timidly, cautiously, it may be, even the boldest of them throwing out delicate hints, giving you subtle invitations to aid them in their search after light. Sometimes it will be only some seemingly careless question they will have to ask you—sometimes they will make you a passionate appeal to tell them of the truth.

Then, if you are a true Catholic, a true and sterling man or woman, is your golden opportunity. Then you may use, indeed, to do a golden deed, the holy powers of the Apostleship of Speech. Quietly, prudently,

tactfully, speaking humbly and earnestly with the eloquence of a grateful and believing heart, you may bear witness, as the apostles did of old, to the Faith that is in you. You may put this searching soul into the true path of salvation, and set his mind and heart upon the way to find the fulness of Catholic truth.

Does all this sound utopian and visionary, too strange and too delightful ever to be true? But it has happened, time and time again, thank God, here in our own country, even among our poorest toilers in the great mill or the busy factory.

"For God's sake, tell me your secret, Mary," cried a haggard-looking girl to the Catholic shoe-worker who stood beside her; "how do you keep so good among us, who are some of us so dreadful bad? I'm sick of all this wicked talk myself. Tell me your secret, how you manage to keep clean of it?"

And do you think Mary had any trouble then in pouring forth to that ready listener her simple story of the strength, the consolation and support she found in her Catholic Faith?

It was a somewhat different environment which witnessed a similar appeal for guidance and direction. Some five or six young business men had come together at a club to talk over plans for opening a new subdivision of residence lots in one of our great cities. They were all good friends, and after the somewhat wearisome details of shares and prices and boundaries had been decided, they fell to friendly talk and banter. At last one of them, a notoriously loose and careless liver, proposed they should all go and finish the evening at a resort near by. The others, laughing, rose as if to comply, but one of the band remained seated firmly in his seat, his forehead knit with displeasure and determination. The others left the room, jesting at the angry brows; but one, a clean-featured, honest-faced fellow of thirty or so, came quickly back and sat down in a chair facing the knight of the earnest countenance.

"Look here, Harry," said he. "Where in thunder do you get your nerve? I've seen you do that sort of thing before—stand out like a rock against a proposition like that, and I'd like to know just how you manage

to do it. I believe I've got as much character as you in most ordinary things, but it certainly is beyond me what reserves you draw on to do a noble turn like this."

It happened that Harry was telling afterward of this event and of the way in which he had astonished himself by the force and aptness of his explanations about the Faith that was in him.

"Well, do you know," said he in conclusion, "I had him thinking fast. When I turned off the tap and glanced at him to see how he was taking it, he looked for all the world as if he'd been seeing visions—he was just gasping from the speed."

Do you think, dear reader, that Harry had any great difficulty just then in practising the Apostleship of Speech?

As to the matter of our Catholic speech to our friends, it must arise, like eloquence in Daniel Webster's definition, from the man, the hearer, and the occasion. One's tact and sympathy should tell him or her how far to go, what to say, and what to leave unsaid. Surely, we do not need any hard and fast rules or guide-posts to direct us in speaking

to our own friends of the subject which should be nearest and dearest to our hearts. Yet, excellent as this sounds in theory, in practice the matter is by no means so smooth and easy. Two things will help us on immensely—knowledge and kindness. To be effective apostles, as we have said before, we must know thoroughly the elements of Catholic belief, and the Catholic attitude on questions of moment of the day. To do this we must read Catholic books (and what excellent ones are coming from the press nowadays!) on Catholic subjects and Catholic views. We must take an interest in Catholic periodicals, we must, in a word, steep our thoughts in a Catholic atmosphere. Then Catholic truth will flow easily and naturally from our lips.

Secondly, there is that other requisite: heartfelt and sympathetic kindness. The great heart of the world is really sad and lonely. The hilariousness, distraction and pretense of our modern men are really only a frantic effort to escape from a great inner hunger and loneliness. To reach that aching heart and minister the balm of truth and consolation one must have recourse to gentle-

ness, sympathy, and kindness. The heart of man, to use a fine old figure, is like a delicate flower—it will not open to burly blasts and tempests of disputation; but let the genial sun and the soft winds of friendliness and kindness shine and blow, and it opens wide to drink the warmth and light, and gives forth grateful fragrance.

If we but fulfill these three conditions in our own person; if we wear a Catholic face before the world, and supply our minds with the riches of Catholic thought and principle, and fill ourselves—our whole selves this time—with true charity, tenderness, and kindness, the Apostleship of Speech will grow easy for us indeed.

"Hard conditions!" you say. So are all conditions hard that lead to noble enterprises. It was never easy to win souls to God. Christ, our Lord, did not find it easy to walk, footsore and weary, through the harsh ways of Israel, repeating an unwelcome message in the ears of an unwilling world. Peter and Paul, and all the holy twelve, did not find it an easy task to range over rude lands and across dangerous seas to save the na-

tions—given over to all lewdness, frivolity and crime. The countless army of God's ministers do not find it easy to lead laborious lives in the midst of weariness and privation to bring men's rebellious necks under the meek yoke of Christ.

Do you, my dear Catholic man or woman, cry out in surprise that you are not worthy to be spoken of along with these? You must endure it. To you, though you were the lowliest, the simplest, the most ignorant among us, were spoken also those stirring yet warning words from His own lips: "You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world; you are a city seated on a mountain; let your light shine before men"; and most solemn, momentous and significant of all, those words which we shall all of us, great and small, teachers and taught, hear from the lips of the Great Judge on the day of the Last Judgment: "Amen, I say unto you, as long as you did it unto one of these, My least brethren, you did it unto Me."

FOOLS' GOLD

SOMEWHERE in our romantic Colonial history is told a very pitiful story. One of those crews of hardy adventurers who crossed the dangerous ocean to tap the riches of the new continent came upon a river whose very sands were gold. There it lay, the precious, beautiful stuff, piled up in glistening heaps, all ready for their eager fingers, and they fell to work with glee. They gathered sackfuls and barrelfuls, laughing at the hardships and the toil, until their vessels were loaded down with the treasure. Then they sailed happily homeward over the perilous sea. And when, after many a storm and many an hour of wretched and anxious toil, they got safely into port, full of comfort and cheer, they spread the wonderful news abroad that they had brought unheard-of riches back with them.

So men from the shore, skilled in metal, came eagerly out to look at the golden hoard. They peered into the sacks of treasure, plunged in their trembling hands, and let the

dust run down in golden streams against the sunlight. Then they turned to the exultant home-comers with scorn and anger in their eyes.

"This the wealth of the New World!" they cried. "Did you ask us out to look at this? It is all only a base ore of iron, you unspeakable simpletons! All your hard-got treasure is nothing but Fools' Gold!"

And it was even so. The weary, dangerous voyaging, the searching and toil, the tedious passage home, had all been only for this. They had a cargo of worthless pyrites; all their labor had only gotten them so much paltry Fools' Gold.

A pitiful story, surely. After all these years one feels a pang of sympathy only to think of it. All that expectancy and labor, and the bitter awakening at the end! Yet within the circle of our own experience, under our very eyes, we often see an even sadder and more tragic folly. For there are many earnest and laborious men and women nowadays, as in all days, who in their own deluded way are sedulous gatherers of shining rubbish; adventurous voyagers and patient

toilers, it may be, but bringers home of nothing but Fools' Gold.

There is the unhappy man who will tell you that he is quite satisfied with doing his duty by his neighbor, and harming no man, and living as a decent fellow should. He does not see any especial need of a definite religion. He never cared much, anyway, for ceremonies and observances and doctrine. A good, clean, upright life is quite enough for him. And so he does, sometimes, go to great lengths and make costly efforts and sacrifices to lead a clean and honorable life as the world sees it. Perhaps he is by nature kindly and courteous, generous and just; and his days go by in fair and noble outward seeming, making a show of good and worthy deeds. But, alas, for all the outward glitter and show of goodness! He is only gathering heaps of silly treasure, painfully loading the precious vessel of his soul with worthless freightage of base Fools' Gold. There is no substance in his pretentious virtue if it lacks the precious touch of the love and service of God. There is no merit in his godless goodness, because it is done for man and man's

eye only; it has not the weight and luster of the golden grace of God.

Again, there is the man who has been brought up in an alien creed, yet comes some day to see that in the Catholic Church, and there alone, is the fulness of God's truth. But he demurs when conscience tells him, "Your place is there!" "Oh," he answers, "not yet! There will be time enough for such a word. There will be ample opportunity for such a change when I am older and more interested in religious thought. God can not mean me to turn the whole current of my life awry just at this time—this specially inconvenient time. Let me bide awhile where I am. Why should one put one's self in such a pother the very moment one finds out something new? And, meantime, can I not go on leading a good, devout, even a fervent, life here in the Church in which I was born? There is a good deal of truth to be found in my religion too. I could serve God better as a Catholic? Very true, but can I not serve Him quite well here?"

Fools' Gold! Fools' Gold! When one lingers on in bad faith where he knows that

God does not wish him to be, his specious show of fervor and of zeal are nothing worth. He may, indeed, put on all the outward shine and glitter of a Christian life. He may multiply observance on observance, and offer many works which God does not require, to balance out his slowness in the one thing God demands. But in the eyes of Heaven are not his acts only a mockery of justice and goodness? Hard words! Yet are they not sadly and pitifully true? Can not God see in these pious works the tinsel glitter of insincerity? Is not such a man wilfully delving in the deceitful river-sands of heresy and error, instead of the deep mines of truth, and bringing up, with all his sweat and labor, only Fools' Gold to meet the eyes of God?

Again (and this is the saddest case of all), there is the fallen-off Catholic, who was once faithful, earnest, and devout, but has let his fervor and service dwindle slowly away into tepidity and carelessness. He lives quite frankly a godless life, just as does the pagan world around him. He does not deny the Faith in theory, only he calmly disregards it in practice. Its restraints and observances

are far too rigid, too uneasy and exacting for his idea of comfort and of peace. And yet in his secret heart he cherishes a hope that he may somehow serve both God and Mammon, that God will somehow be content with the good he does, and not be too strict and stern with him for the good he fails to do. He has a lingering expectation that his honest life, his kindness to his friends, his doing hurt to no man, may raise him just as safely to Heaven as some of those anxious folk who never miss Mass on Sunday and are so solicitous in keeping the precepts of the Church. Is not his fair-dealing a glorious and goodly thing? Are not his courtesy and good feeling holy and blessed, and will not his clean life here be found worthy of the eternal life to come?

Fools' Gold! Fools' Gold! Fools' Gold! What is all this material goodness in the eyes of God, who has deigned to make known the very precise and definite service which He jealously requires, and who finds that wished-for service insolently slighted and denied? What would an employer think or say if he found his employee taking his own ease and

pleasure, doing his own sweet will in everything, and seeking to make up for this neglect of duty by pleasant manners and a winning smile? Surely, he who has known the fulness of supernatural truth, and who turns from the practice of our blessed Faith to seek his happiness here and hereafter in the empty exercise of merely natural and pagan virtues, is of all men the vainest gatherer of vainest dross against the dreadful Day of God!

And so one might go on with example after example of men nowadays who carry on the outward show of a blameless and upright life, but those works are mockery and their good deeds a delusion for want of the touch of grace and faith, for lack of the true ring and luster of heavenly merit which only grace and faith can give.

But what have all these reflections to do with us others, who are neither contemners of religion nor followers of an alien creed? Only this! We know, or we should know, very clearly the false gold from the true. Suppose there had been with those hapless adventurers some man skilled in metallurgy,

who could have told at a glance the false gold from the real. Would it not have been a crying shame, a terrible sin in him, not to call out, and protest, and warn the deluded crew that they were wasting their trouble and their toil? Would it not have been simple madness for him to have acquiesced in their vain delight, and caught the prevalent enthusiasm, and sympathized with their fools' joy in their fools' treasure?

Yet how many Catholic men and women who know full well that those who are near to them, and dear, are living in a fools' paradise of delusion and heaping up worthless and tinsel deeds against the great trying-day, are deaf to the kindness and duty which bids them warn these gatherers of Fools' Gold?

"Oh, he, or she, is so good, so upright, so generous," we hear them say of these deluded ones. "Why, he is better than many Catholics; why should I trouble him with advice?"

Why tell him, in other words, that he is heaping up false treasures, bogus gold? Why say the word of warning and remon-

strance? Why show our uneasiness, our distress and disapproval of this squandering of precious lives, this wasting of effort and of time that will never count for Heaven?

We do not act so, as we have said before, in matters where earthly treasure is in question, where money, lands, goods, are the stake. If we see a friend of ours wasting his toil in a bogus venture, or spending good money on worthless stock, we hurry and give him the word. May we not do as much in matters of eternal moment, when the gold at stake is the gold of heavenly merit, with which a man must buy of his God the Kingdom without end?

Is not this one reason why so many Catholics fall away little by little from all pious observance and go down by gentle grades, down the easy slope of indifference to the sloughs of unbelief, because their own people, who live at their side, do not reach out a hand in time to save them?

They remark, of course, the first beginnings, the youthful piety growing chill, the old fidelity at Mass and at Communion waxing slack and poor. Now a Sunday morning

abed, no holy Mass; now a slighting word about sacred things that shows that the soul is growing cold. If we would only aid them then! If we would only stop them there in the first steps of their downward course, when a little leap would put them on the sunny heights again.

We need not take them aside and put on a solemn look and lecture them. Need not! Often it would be a most silly and ineffective way. But a quiet word, when we see their ears are open and their heart is ready, a sorrowful look when we feel sure they will understand. Not many words are necessary when a friend speaks lovingly to his friend.

And if we, their own friends, their own people, refuse this easy, necessary work of love, who else under Heaven is to attend to it? God has put them in our hands, as He puts all men into the hands of other men. Can a stranger do it? Can even the priest? How is he to know of the small and faint beginnings? When he is besought to work a change the harm is already done. Our friend whom we could have saved when his evil course was just commencing has now

strayed far away from Church and priest and altar; he hears all pious exhortations with a hard air of self-sufficient unbelief.

Little by little the fervor of his youth cooled away; but now he is quite cold. The priest, who could not have hindered the evil, can scarcely begin to cure it now. Only you, whose word, whose look, might have kept off the mortal sickness, only you can bring it medicine. You must begin, even now, now at this late and evil day, and little by little win him back again.

"But one must be prudent and tactful and discreet! It does not do to speak much on such subjects, one may so easily do more harm than good! Rather than say or do too much, isn't it often better to let such folk alone?"

Yes, by all means, let us be prudent and discreet, but when were such precious gifts as prudence and tact required for such an easy thing as merely letting our erring friends alone? Indifference and laziness would seem quite sufficient for that. No, our tact and prudence may come into glorious play in choosing the time and the manner of

bringing them to see the sad emptiness of their fictitious virtue, the melancholy delusion of their sedulous gatherings of base Fools' Gold! There one may find grand scope for every particle of prudence and of tact which he has got or God has given him!

In sober truth it is a difficult task to open men's eyes to their own amazing folly, and point them out the worthlessness of their laborious lives, spent apart from the will and the service of God. It is a task which one might well refuse to enter on at all, were not men's very souls the stake for which we toil. But God has put our brothers' destiny in the hands of us other men, and set us near them to warn them—tactfully, discreetly always—lest they waste all their precious lives in gathering Fools' Gold! Let us not suffer our own sloth or reluctance or false diffidence to hold us back, where we see our duty clear and recognize the urgent need. For we may quiet our consciences now, and justify our own non-interference with many specious arguments; but what will our friends whom we have not warned and counseled say to us, think of us, when they have

got past that moment of terrible awakening and revelation which is the lightning-flash of the judgment of God?

"You knew and you did not tell us, you saw and you did not cry out in warning and fear! You let us, your own people, fill our hands with false and bogus riches, gather up for the eye of a Judge who knows no deceiving the worthless dross and ore that has no price nor value in Heaven! All the while you knew that we should go poor, and naked, and mean before the eye of God. And yet you left us so long to gather the tinsel of seeming good works without love or grace or merit. Fools' Gold! Oh, you unkind friends! Fools' Gold!"

THE ETHICS OF SATURDAY NIGHT

SAID Paterfamilias not long ago: "These Saturday nights are getting to be the plague of my life!"

"How so?" queried his friend.

"Well, you see, some six of my children are just at the age when 'society' is in their dreams. And somehow or other—oh, indeed, the reason's quite plain!—the dances and dinners and theater parties must all be on Saturday night. So they come to me for leave to go out—Saturday night! If I refuse them—as I often have in conscience to do—of course there are wailings and moanings till Monday at least. If I let them go, you can fancy what happens next morning. They get home in the wee sma' hours and are all so desperately weary, and sleepy, and sulky and sad! They do not miss Mass—they are too well brought up for that—but their mother has all manner of trouble to rouse them on time, and what sort of prayers do you think they can give the good God, when their heads are all fuddled with sleep?"

"I see. It is awkward," said the listener. "But why always Saturday night?"

"Why? How innocent you are!" answered Paterfamilias with a rueful sort of a smile. "Because we, who are so largely a pagan people, are getting to pagan customs as well. Because only two out of ten of our men go to church of a Sunday. For the remainder the Lord's day is Morpheus' day, a day not so much of rest as of sleep. To sleep one's head off Sunday morning is so much the fashion that men who work hard all the week, and so must go to bed betimes, can be got to stay up till all hours Saturday night. Sunday morning, you know, they can lie a-bed if they like and sleep until noon."

"Now that you mention it," said his friend with a thoughtful air, "I do seem to have noticed rather a leaning to 'have things' on Saturday night. The week's end dinner and dance at the club must be on Saturday night. The social organizations meet of a Saturday night, the theaters are crowded then—and it surely tempts even our Catholic people to stay up much later than ever they should, if Sunday is to see them properly at Mass."

"Oh, and the trouble doesn't end even there!" said Paterfamilias despondently. "These hilarious Saturday nights and the drowsy Sundays after them, are teaching our people to look on any religious exercise of a Sunday as a burdensome appendage, instead of its being, as they used to think, the proper way to spend a part of the day of rest. Mass they will go to, grudgingly—the later and the shorter the better—and if there is no sermon, better still! But all the old-time practices of devotion, the beads at home, where all the family pray together, Benediction and Vespers of a Sunday afternoon—these things are quite beside the mark for them. A hurried Mass, a sleep and a walk, a rummage through the sickly-smelling Sunday papers, a more or less gentle headache from last night's sleeplessness, then Monday; and how much of their Sunday has been for God? Only so much as one must give to save one from a mortal sin!"

"A sad state of things," said the other; "how shall we cure it?"

"Hard to think! The priests might preach against it, but it would take a deal of preach-

ing to cry the evil down. It is in the air. Every one goes out of Saturday night; one is a poke and a bigot if he ventures to inveigh against it."

"I know of one way," said the friend, speaking slowly and thoughtfully, "a very effective way, too, though not pleasant at first, I dare say. Down in Virginia, where I go in the Summer, there lives a good mother who has solved a very similar problem, all by herself. She has five stalwart sons and three daughters, who are, as you may fancy, the pride of her heart. One of the sons and one of the daughters are married, but the rest are the soul of the social life thereabouts, and nothing is quite successful unless the Warners are there. Well, now comes the point of the story. Do you know"—and he planted an emphatic finger on the other's knee—"that whenever any soul in that town, Jew or Gentile, or Sleep-o'-Sunday though he or she may be, wants to give an entertainment and chooses a day to give it, the first question they ask is this: 'Is the day after that the first Friday of the month?' Then there is a rush for the calendars, and if they

find the next day is 'First Friday,' the date they have chosen is changed out of hand. And why? Because, as they all of them know and say, 'the Warners won't come! They always go to church with their mother on the first Friday, you know.' So they do, all the nine of them, and up to the altar-rail with her, to honor the Sacred Heart. You can fancy whether an example like that makes an impression or no!"

"I imagine it does," said Paterfamilias admiringly, stroking his chin. "If we had enough of such mothers and children most of our urgent questions would solve themselves with a rush."

This bit of serious talk, which is here very plainly set down pretty much as it came from the speakers' own lips, is worth thinking over by every good Catholic of us who wants God's way to prevail in the world. Isn't it true that Sunday, as the Lord's day, is vanishing fast from our lives? That is the way with the spirit of the world. If it can not quite crush out our feasts, it will tamper with them and change them until they are something quite different from what

God meant when He bade them to be. It has changed Christmas so; and Christmas, to more than half of the world, is now a feverish season of feasting and gifts, with the Christ Child still in His stable and a queer oaf called Santy perched up on the throne. On All Hallows' Eve, and on Easter, what do the little ones think of most—the Holy Souls and the risen Saviour, or silly jokes and colored Easter eggs? Shall we let the peace and rest and prayer of Sunday pass from the world and give place to a feast of sleep-after-revel, a time to recover from the follies of Saturday night?

Paterfamilias was right. If we Catholics stood sturdily out for a clear head and a tranquil heart for Sunday morning, and refused to make revel of Saturday night, the evil custom would change. We are too many, too widespread, too necessary, we Catholics, for most social gatherings to be quite complete unless we choose to go. Let us not choose to go of Saturday nights, nor on Thursdays before our First Friday Communion, nor on the eves of any of the great sacred festivals. Above all, we will not set

our own entertainments on those days, and so lead other folks into the temptation of spending their Sundays amiss.

When we are asked out ourselves on a date that happens just to be Saturday night, and there is no very urgent reason why it should be Saturday rather than any other of the seven long days of the week, what a neat little, kind little, helpful little deed it would be to give, with an air of friendly surprise some such answer as this:

"Why, that's Saturday, you know! Can't we make it another time? I don't just like being up late on Saturday night. It makes one so heavy and sleepy on Sunday morning, and I detest being drowsy and stupid at Mass."

If all of us Catholics had the courage and zeal to answer like this, what would become, I wonder, of the Sleep-o'-Sunday folk and their revels of Saturday night?

"But," some one will say, "Saturday night is the only night of all the week when I am free to do as I choose—to have a little pleasure and rest and be with my friends." Very true. But, honestly, do you feel rested,

and happy, and calm after the excitement and wear of Saturday night? Would not you and your friends be better and happier of a Sunday morning if your Saturday night had been passed in some quiet and cheerful amusement, which leaves off betimes, and sends you tranquil to sleep?

Men are like sheep. However rocky the road, some one must break from the beaten way before the flock will turn, but when one man takes to better ways he will carry many along with him.

THE POOR—OUR CREDITORS

Is it not enough to make us tremble, to see how many otherwise good, and even fervent, Catholics, habitually neglect Christ's solemn admonition to help the poor? "The poor indeed you have always with you," so we seldom can plead a lack of opportunity for putting into practice the grave commandment of Our Lord.

In town and country, now as ever, they are always with us, needy and numerous—not only the poor who have become so by their own fault or negligence, but the innocent poor, the victims of a mother's sloth or a father's crime. What excruciating miseries they suffer! The weakness of hunger, the agonies of shame, the pang of anxious uncertainty as to whence shall come their evening's shelter and to-morrow's food; the hopelessness of utter indigence—these are often with them, and threaten them always.

The child wails to its mother for food, but the mother herself is faint with hunger. The mother sees her little ones perishing

from want and shivering with cold, and she weeps before her husband and their father. But he, too, perhaps, is crushed with poverty and feeble with disease, and he looks on in despairing agony, unable to relieve them. They cry aloud to their Father in Heaven, who has compassion on the least thing that lives, and who hears the young ravens when they call to Him for food. But that infinitely merciful and tender Father is a God of order and of law, and He has given man into man's keeping, and put the relief of the wretched into the hands of his fellow-men.

It is to us, then, that the hungry and destitute must turn at last, as to their appointed saviours from misery and distress. Do we minister to them in tenderness and compassion, or are we so thoughtless in our comfortable plenty, as to deny these wretched ones the little aid they seek? Ah, when our own children gather round us, clean and fair and merry, well-clad and well-housed against cold and storm, innocent of hunger and of shame, we must let our thoughts wander in pity from their bright looks, safe as they are in the sheltered ways of happy childhood,

to the wretched shanty where lurk the squalid children of the poor. Christ prays us to have pity—at least upon the little ones; to take compassion in a practical way, on neglected children, ragged, shivering and weeping, cold and hungry, ignorant, it may be, and abandoned. The leavings of many a table would make them a banquet; the cast-off clothing of richer little ones would be a decent covering to wrap their wasted limbs; a little part of the money spent in mere indulgence would mean to them very life, and happiness, and cheerful hope.

But this is not all. There is another thought which to some of us may prove more piercing and more moving still. We are the almoners of God. He has given man into the hands of man, and made each one's brother his keeper. "Love thy neighbor," is second only to "Love thy God." Now the wail of the starving poor is going up forever around us, and near us, even at our very doors. What meaning has that incessant, piteous crying of hungry hearts and of hungry bodies, in the ever-listening ears of God? Alas! May it not be an unceasing

though unconscious accusation—an indictment uttered loud and strong against us at the dreadful bar of the Most High? And shall we answer to that charge, that we were thoughtless and distracted and busied with our own concerns—when we have such commands and often-repeated warnings? Or is this a light duty, to be easily disregarded, or a trifling opportunity for merit, to be readily forgotten, when Christ Himself has declared: "Amen, I say unto you as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it unto Me. As long as you did it not to one of these My least brethren, you did it not unto Me"?

Would that it were only the very rich in this world's goods who stood in danger of this grave charge and stern accounting! Would that those of us were at least exempt, who are poor ourselves, and can scarcely give an alms in money or in food! But the precept is most broad, the needy are without number, their wants, various and manifold, so that there is not one of us who can not give alms of some sort, if willing to do so, and there is not one of us who can give but

is held by this command of God. Nor does our personal inability to minister to the poor excuse us, for there is the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, with many other charitable societies, ready to be our vicar; nor does even the lack of earthly goods acquit us, for we can give at least the alms of prayer.

God speaks, it is true—as we speak most commonly—of corporal aid and comfort, but these, after all, are things of lesser import—types and figures of the aid we owe to our neighbor's spirit; of the alms we should give, of love to his needy heart, of faith to his starving soul. God speaks in terms of temporal aid for this further reason also, that that the body must be fed and clothed before the spirit can be strengthened, and he who lets his neighbor thirst, or starve, or lie uncared for in sickness or imprisonment, when he might easily aid him, will scarcely have the countenance to pretend concern for his sick heart, or lonely soul.

It is, then, a salutary thing for us all to read this precept over, as it is written in many ways and for many ages by prophets, sages, and saints; and to take it practically to

heart. And there is perhaps no other place in the whole cycle of the Scriptures where its weight is forced upon us so emphatically as in the description of that last great Judgment where the warnings of the Eternal reach a sanction and a summing-up in the momentous sentence to be pronounced on man, before he goes forth to everlasting joy or woe. How strange in our ears are the warning words of that sentence, as Christ has told them to us. "Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in: naked, and you covered Me: sick, and you visited Me: I was in prison, and you came to Me. . . . Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand: Depart from Me, you cursed, . . . For I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat: . . . naked, and you covered Me not, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me. Then they also shall answer Him, saying:

Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to Thee? Then He shall answer them, saying: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to Me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just, into life everlasting."—Matt. xxv, 34-46.

No word here of murder, or blasphemy, or the seven deadly sins; or any of those offenses from which in our inward searchings we are likely to thank Heaven we are so free. No; but the just are to be rewarded and the wicked to be condemned on this strange standard: "Have ye fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and the imprisoned? Have ye pitied the wretched and needy with an active pity, and succored them in their distress?" Not that other good deeds are disregarded, nor that other crimes shall fail of their just retribution on that awful day. But it is of these works of charity that we are most strongly reminded, because it is these that even good men seem likeliest to forget. Let us heed, then, our Saviour's

warning and take pity on the distressed. Let us be good stewards and faithful almoners, spending our goods and labor, with care and gentleness and love, on the helpless members of Christ's family, the great, piteous, suffering multitude of His destitute poor.

OUR HOLIER SELVES

THE path of good endeavor, of toil for your neighbor and you is always steep, as Our Lord foretold it would be; but, besides being steep, it grows very weary and dusty betimes, and we need some cheery thought to brighten our hearts on the way. Now the feasts of the Church are like springs by the roadside, each with its cooling and strengthening flood of holy, encouraging thought. And of all the feasts of the year, Easter brings us courage and strength; for Easter, besides being the Feast of Christ's Resurrection, is also in a special way the Feast of our holier selves!

"Our holier selves! What in the world does he mean?"

Let St. Paul explain for me, so that I may not seem to be saying any new thing not vouched for by the Church. In that first magnificent Epistle of his to the Christians of Corinth, in the fifteenth chapter, after he has told them of the Resurrection of Our Lord, the Apostle repeats again and again, utterly

to confound some rash deniers of it, this truth which rings like a trumpet-call to stir us up to effort, hope, and longing. "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again. . . . For if the dead rise not again, neither is Christ risen again. . . . Awake, ye just, and sin not. . . . For there are bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial. . . . It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory. . . . The first man was of the earth, earthly: the second man, from heaven, heavenly. . . . Therefore as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear also the image of the heavenly."

The Resurrection of Our Lord, then, which we hail with Easter joy is only the first fruit of that great and general resurrection when we, too, who shall have laid down our earthly selves in death may hope to rise in everlasting glory clad in our holier selves forever more!

That holier self of ours! It is sweet to think how fair, how goodly and how glorious it shall be, if only we are steadfast in God's

grace. Here on earth, as we grow gradually to know ourselves better and better, we see with increasing self-contempt all the sad havoc that our forefathers' sins and our own sins have worked in our minds and hearts and wills. Even with proud, ungodly men this knowledge begets a secret self-disgust that grows deeper and deeper in them through the years; while in the hearts of the Saints it flowers out into the white blossom of humility.

But on some happy day, if we cleave valiantly to God, we shall be changed. The stroke of death will ease us of our broken body, the keen and fiery bath of Purgatory will leave our souls all clean and fit for Heaven. Then the light of glory will transform us in a twinkling from the poor earthly selves we know too well to the fair, heavenly selves that shall be ours for days eternal!

It is a pleasant thing to dwell on that celestial and immortal beauty and dignity which will adorn us, soul and body, as we walk with all the other Saints of Heaven through the bright mansions of our Father's home. Ear hath not heard, eye hath not

seen, what a glorious and supernal loveliness shall clothe about even the least of that great, princely multitude. The noblest mind, the tenderest, truest heart that ever was on earth, or that poet's fancy ever dreamed, or flatterer's pencil ever drew, is very far beneath the bright reality that shall be ours in Heaven!

There is another aspect to this thought of our holier selves which Easter brings, on which we should often dwell to stir ourselves to valiant deeds for God. Even now we carry in our souls the seed, the earnest and the pledge of all that glory and that loveliness. For the seed of our heavenly selves is Sanctifying Grace.

With every holy act of ours which merits increase of our glory in Heaven, the hand of God sows a new measure of this precious seed in our souls. Each day that we go forth to do God's will and please our Father in Heaven, we come home richer unspeakably in this celestial treasure. So long as we serve God and keep our souls from grievous sins, our store of the precious seed of glory grows and grows—and when the light of

God's eternal sunshine falls upon us and we wake into His halls of everlasting joy and peace, the seed of Sanctifying Grace which we have got with pain and toil through the long labors of a holy life will spring suddenly to flower in our souls and bodies, and we shall blossom forth to that especial brightness of eternal glory which corresponds to the very measure of the Grace which our good works have laid up in our souls!

We need not wait, then, we must not wait, until the very eve of our entrance into Heaven to make ready our holier selves. For the earnest of them and the seed of them must be within our heart each hour, growing greater, sinking deeper day by day. Indeed, if we are prudent and reasonable men our whole business in this world, and the most serious and steady purpose of our lives, must always be, by serving and loving God, to gather more and more of that Sanctifying Grace, which shall bloom out so gloriously in us under the sunshine of Heaven. In our brief little lives it must all be gathered and garnered. With the summons of death our profitable toils are at an end forever. All

the love and praise of all the Saints in Heaven can not add one iota of glory to any soul that has passed the gates of death.

There is another way besides this in which we must be solicitous for our holier selves, even while we are here on earth far off from our heavenly country. With care and prayer and effort, we may show forth those holier selves of ours even in our earthly lives. We often speak of our better self, of listening to our better self, and following our better self, and letting our better self get uppermost in our acts and thoughts. Now our better self on earth is the foreshadowing and promise of our better self in Heaven.

It is told of St. Catharine of Siena that her countenance sometimes wonderfully changed and took on the evident likeness of the face of Christ. What happened to the countenance of the holy virgin was type and figure of what may happen to our own souls and lives, if we are faithful in listening to and striving with the secret whisperings of the grace of God. Little by little, struggle by struggle, trial after trial will bring our better and our holier selves uppermost in us,

and mold us slowly but surely into the very likeness of Christ. Meantime, every holy act and thought and word will heap up great treasures of the seed of glory within us. Little by little it must be done, day by day we must bring forth the better self within, but the end is no little thing. All those acts of self-restraint and self-denial which give our better self the victory, will form in us holy habits strong and fair, until the countenance of our soul is molded into the seeming of the soul of Christ even here on earth, as it must be in Heaven.

After these reflections, it is not hard to see why Easter, the feast of the Promise of our Resurrection, should bring with it the strengthening and confirming of our every holy purpose and good resolve. Now we must pray and labor and weep, sowing the seed, against the morning of that eternal Easter Day, so that when we rise again from the dead, it may be a rising with Christ our Lord into surpassing glory, clad for all ages of ages in our due beauty, dignity and power, in all the fulness and the splendor of our holier selves.

THE BURNING QUESTION

THERE is a time of year when the closing of the schoolday life brings before the mind of many a youth and maiden the old, old question which has perplexed, each in its turn, all rising generations: "What shall I do in the world?" Time was in our land, when the choice of a way of life was simpler than now. The world had not grown so varied and delightful and men chose more soberly and calmly, and often with an anxious eye to the life to come. Now the richness and complexity of modern days have placed so many goods and trinkets in the world's great Vanity Fair that it is hard to turn our eyes from them to look toward Heaven at all.

"Shall it be wealth, or fame, or love, or lettered ease? Shall I choose pleasant rural haunts, with freedom from the crowd, or plunge into city throngs?" So the young adventurer, half distracted, half delighted, counts his opportunities and talents, and

chooses hopefully, dreaming meanwhile such golden, golden dreams.

But the great, turbid current of the world keeps on its wonted way. It buffets each newcomer as lustily as the last, cools and drenches his feverish expectation, and flings him aside at length into some quiet eddy of old age, if he endures so far, to ponder, oh, so differently, on the green, foolish fancies of his departed youth.

This bright intoxication of youthful hopes, and the disillusionment that comes with age, have been the pleasant sport of wits and moralists time out of mind; but when one dwells on the pain and loss and sorrow that this foolish grasping after worldly goods has caused, amusement changes quickly to anxiety and grief. What a pity! What a tragic and terrible pity, to risk all and struggle so much for this little, sorrowful dying-space which we call life, and to forget and neglect the full, eternal, glorious life which is to be hereafter.

Dear young adventurers, pausing on the threshold of life and face to face with this fateful question of your true vocation, do

not follow, as fools do, the easy counsels of the world. Do not ask yourselves: "What shall I buy in Vanity Fair?" but ask: "What is my vocation? What noble and precious work does God intend me to do for Him as He sends me out into the world?" Then, whatever answer your true heart gives you, follow it manfully. "Choose the noblest way of life, however hard," was the counsel of Pythagoras to his disciples, "for by use and habit even the hard things will become easy and sweet."

What bright fields of possible endeavor stretch wide and fair before your hesitating feet. There is the religious life of poverty, chastity and obedience; a truly angelic state, wherein a man comes most near to Jesus Christ. Kings, like St. Louis, have wept for this holy calling; saintly Popes and Bishops have grieved when summoned to their dignities, and have eagerly returned to their humble cells, so soon as God's glory and soul's good would allow. Moreover, this most noble way of life, like so many of God's greatest gifts, opens to poor and lowly as to the rich and great, to simple as to wise. The

humble lay brothers and sisters are welcomed with no less charity and joy than is the scholar and the sage. Here men live lives most nearly like the angels. Search your soul, therefore, earnestly, lest you should lose so priceless a vocation. Oh, the madness of those who neglect a religious calling! the cruel, mistaken fondness of parents and friends who dare to interfere with God's designs on His chosen ones, out of flimsy pretexts, sprung from selfish love or worldly hopes!

Then there is the glorious and amazing dignity of God's holy priesthood, "a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech," standing daily to life to God the Eternal Sacrifice, fed at the Table which the Seraphs envy, father and ruler of the people of God! How is it that our young men so lightly overlook the priesthood when their eager hearts are dreaming of honor and power and achievement? Is any earthly dignity like this? Is any power like this power to call the eternal God from His high throne, to bind and loose the very souls of men? If to do good to our fellow be our desire, who

has so direct and grave a mission to save and help his kind as has the priest? Finally, as to the glories of the world to come, we have God's own word for it, that they who instruct others unto justice shall shine like stars in the Kingdom of Heaven.

All are not called to such amazing dignities, and for such as are not there open out the various worthy callings of the world wherein to serve God nobly and aid their fellow-men. Are we to choose even here according to our freakish fancy, or from vain desire of wealth or pleasure or fame or ease? God, since He is all-wise and all-provident, must have designed each of us for some special work and given us talents and graces apt for that definite end. Our character, our gifts, above all, the still, small whispers of His inspiration, duly weighed with holy counsel, must point us out His will. "How can I best honor God, serve my fellow, save my soul?" this is the proper question; not "how can I live the easiest life or have the keenest pleasure, or gather the richest gear?"

How much depends on one's first choice in life! What fearful hazards lie about those

earliest steps! Never trust that you may experiment and try again. Never hope to venture rashly among the maddening pleasures of the world and yet come off safely, somehow, after all. It is a fateful and crucial time, this entrance into life, to which your eager hopes strain on so fast, and gravely and earnestly must you prepare for it. Pray well, think deeply, take counsel with a wise confessor, go often to the Sacraments, choose as you think you will wish to have chosen when you must come to die.

LAYMEN'S RETREATS

The movement for laymen's retreats, which has wrought and is working still such wonders in Europe, has come over the water. It is making its way, gradually but surely, across the face of America, and already we hear great things of the interest these retreats are arousing, of the growing numbers that attend them, and their precious and lasting fruit.

The idea of retreats, even of retreats for laymen, is of course not by any means new. Not to speak of older days, it is now more than three hundred years since St. Ignatius, by an unquestionable inspiration from on high, composed his method of Spiritual Exercises. It is an old story how he and his children after him gave these exercises with such fruit to all classes of persons, that the Jesuits were accused of witchcraft and of using magic to change so suddenly the characters and souls of men. Since St. Ignatius' time the yearly retreat has come to be the very marrow of the spiritual life in all communi-

ties of religious, and at most Jesuit Novitiates some rooms are set aside for those men who may wish to come, singly or in twos or threes, to go through the exercises of a private retreat. But the undertaking of which we speak is something over and above all this. It has the vigor and impetus of a new and individual enterprise. It is organized, widespread and energetic. It embraces large and definite bodies of all kinds and conditions of folk.

The movement in its present form has been growing and gaining head in the Old World for nearly forty years. It rose very obscurely in Belgium about the year 1865, and was at first confined to a narrow sphere. From those lowly beginnings the work has prospered and spread until at the present time it has gone far and wide over Europe, and even into the distant colonies. It is so well established that there are now more than one hundred Houses of Retreats for men, and those for women are even more numerous. Most of these are exclusively given over to the work, and some of them afford accommodations for a surprising number of retreat-

ants. In Belgium alone there are twenty-two buildings devoted to this purpose, almost all of them in the vicinity of great industrial centers where it is possible to gather rich and poor alike without compelling them to be long away from their business or trade. Over a hundred thousand men of both the working and employing classes have made a three days' retreat in these houses since their establishment, and the number of women who have made retreats is still greater. Some of the other countries of Europe are not far behind. In Germany, for example, the number of retreats annually made by men is said to equal the yearly count in Belgium. In France, Austria, Italy, Spain, Holland, Switzerland, the work is at a notable stage of development, and it has been begun in England, Ireland, Denmark, and even as far abroad as British India, Ceylon, China, and Madagascar.

Among our neighbors of South America, too, the work goes on apace. Mexico has no less than three houses of retreat. In Santiago de Chili, we have been told more than two hundred thousand souls have gone through

the Exercises in the last ten years. In Colombia, forty-four thousand private retreats were counted in two years. Everywhere great results are found to follow. In Canada, too, the work of retreats is being pushed forward with energy and success.

Besides many of the retreat houses, societies of laymen have arisen to promote the movement and perpetuate its fruits. These societies band together the erstwhile retreatants for mutual encouragement in their good resolves; they collect funds to build new houses, organize bands of retreatants, distribute literature bearing upon the work, and even pay the wages of those workingmen whose families would otherwise suffer by their absence from their daily toil. Generous contributions to this latter end are also made by some employers, even non-Catholic ones, who realize the benefit to their interests which comes from the good influence of a retreat upon their workmen, and the antidote a good retreat affords against the dreaded plague of Socialism.

In the United States the movement is still in its infancy, but it is a vigorous and thriv-

ing infancy, promising noble growth. When our people awake to the immense power for good which these retreats can exercise among them they will not fail to lend their enthusiastic support. The unity, fervor and zeal which we cry out for in greater measure among our Catholic laity, the interest in social work and in the cause of Christian charity, which modern conditions more and more demand of us, and the solid faith and devotion which these unbelieving times require, are nowhere to be found in fuller measure. The antidote for modern fallacies and for the poison of Socialism, Rationalism, Liberalism—all the venomous swarm of 'isms which the stagnant pools of materialistic thought have bred upon us—awaits us, too, where our brothers of Europe have found it, behind the quiet walls of houses of retreats.

In New York City the work has been on foot for several years and is reaching notable proportions. At St. Mary's College, Kansas, an annual retreat was inaugurated some years ago, and the movement grows from year to year. At Santa Clara College, Cali-

fornia, the work has been going on for a number of years and four retreats are given every year. The Fathers of the Divine Word at Techny, Ill., are also carrying on laymen's retreats with gratifying fruit. At Brooklyn, near Cleveland, O., and at Florissant, Mo., retreats have long been given to individuals and small groups of men. The Sacred Heart College of Prairie du Chien, Wis., has likewise begun the work of retreats, and in the South the new College of St. Charles, at Grand Coteau, La., has been turned into a house of retreats for laymen, during the summer months, at the request of many Catholic citizens.

What we may hope from these good beginnings one may judge by studying the movement at its fullest stage of development in the countries of Europe. There are special buildings, built with a view to the retreatants' needs, roomy, pleasant, and secluded, and usually in the country or on the outskirts of some quiet town. To these come continually bands of men from city and countryside, all manner of men: some of them fervent and exemplary, some, it may

be, on the verge of making shipwreck of their faith; wise men and unlearned (for not the least hopeful element in this work is its universal and democratic appeal); "gentlemen," as one list has it, "farmers, youths, commercial employees, workmen, students, seminarists, recruits, and conscripts, professors, brothers of religious orders, priests!" In bands of from twenty to a hundred they go through the exercises of the retreat, pondering seriously the great and fundamental truths, weighing and squaring their daily lives to the measure of the Faith that is in them, putting in order the things of time and providing duly for the all-important issues of death and of eternity.

Then they go forth again to their homes, to the office, or shop or factory, and here the true work of the retreat and its efficacy are seen in their lives. They are changed men. They have seen a vision, and the world does not look quite the same afterwards. It is a holier place and a happier, and they have a charm against its evils and a clue to its snares and its confusions. The delusions of the world and the devil and the flesh are fallen

from them, they have a balm against their old soreness and discontent. Socialism and Rationalism and Liberalism can no more deceive them. while they hold clear the holy reflections and the strong convictions gained during the ponderings of their retreat. In a word, they have been "oriented," their hearts are set right and they come soberly yet joyfully to make a new start in life.

These men, filled with a new spirit and a keener realization of their faith, are not content with their personal betterment alone. They have caught a livelier zeal, they wish to become apostles. Henceforth the movement finds in them its sturdiest supporters and most eager advocates. Their own experience guides them in the work, a very important one, of inducing others to come and make retreats.

It must be confessed that many men at first look upon the proposal that they should spend three whole days in meditation and prayer with a feeling of uncertainty and strangeness, not unmixed with apprehension. They look upon it as an odd experiment, to say the least, and dread not a little the idea

of spending so long a time in silence and in thought. It is interesting to notice the change in their attitude when one speaks to them after the exercises are over. Those three days were the happiest, the most interesting, the most profitably spent in all their experience. It was not so much that the matter presented to them was new—much of it after all they had known from their catechism days—but the method, the clear, strong, logical development of meditation after meditation, the atmosphere of retirement and peace, the encouragement of their companions, not least the catching enthusiasm of their director, all these made the good old truths shine clearer, glow warmer, burn deeper into the soul. Instead of dreading the ordeal now, many of them are concerned already about arranging for its repetition, and make joyful preparation to return each year for three days more of this attractive and effective cure for souls.

When we seek to explain to ourselves the real nature of the Spiritual Exercises, it would be hard perhaps to find a better brief characterization of the work than this: that

it is in very truth a skilful and effective cure of souls. We all of us know that the rush and struggle of modern life goes hard with the body and the mind. Perhaps we do not so often pause to think that they are wearing and trying too upon the strength and purity of the immortal soul. It stands to reason that just as the feverish excesses of the present time cause men constantly to suffer from brain-fag and nerve-fag, and drive them into breakdowns and collapses, so those very same excesses and distractions, the same headlong chase after amusement and pleasure, make the poor soul suffer and grow ailing too. True, the soul can not give such sharp warning of its illness as the body does. It may be perishing, or already dead with sin, and no headaches rack us, we feel no keep and bodily distress. But whether we are conscious of it or not, just as the clang and clatter of city streets jar our nerves, and its smoke and dust soil our faces and hands as we pass, so our souls are hurt and jarred with the many noisy distractions, and soiled by the murky spiritual atmosphere of the world in which we are forced to live.

Now, when the body craves for repose and change of scene there are broad, quiet country places, cheerful sanitariums, or camps in the mountains, or houses by the sea, to nurse our feverish bodies to health again, and heal the jarred nerves and calm the whirling brain. So, one may truly say, the House of Retreats, quiet, pleasant, and secluded, is a place of calm and cure for the strained, distracted soul.

This spiritual rest is, however, only one side of the retreats; for if our body craves healthful exercise to vary its repose still more does our fiery and restless spirit. So there is another aspect to these retreats which gives them their other name, the Spiritual Exercises. "Spiritual Exercises"—the words explain themselves, for what is it to exercise our spirit, but to work with the three great powers of the soul, the memory, intellect, and will? To work with prayer and reflection and reasoning and strong resolve—for this we enter into retreat—to realize the true meaning of life, the purpose of God in placing us in this world, the use of the creatures He has set about us, the destiny we must aim

at and the means by which that destiny may be best attained, and to work also in taking measures and forming resolves, to carry this realization deep into our lives.

But the mere clamor and distraction of our daily life are not always its worst peril to ourselves. There are positive dangers, and there are aggressive enemies. False theories of religion and morals are abroad, which almost without our knowing it poison our thoughts, pervert our ideals, and weaken the divine health and vigor of the faith within us. Indifference in matters of belief, a tolerance of false ideals of family life, loose morals, vile and insidious literature, false standards of honesty in business, political corruption, an impatience of authority, Socialism, a false Liberalism—the enumeration of modern errors and perils reads like a catalogue of subdivisions of the Deadly Sins!

As a protective from this miasma, this vaporous poison which rises from the low places of the world, it is well at times to climb to clearer and holier heights and fill one's lungs with some saving breaths of unpolluted air. It is well to dwell a while

on the pure truths and unselfish principles of Holy Faith, which are a medicine and an antidote against these evils. It is this opportunity which retreats for laymen offer to Catholic men who are in the world.

Finally, one must not confuse the idea of a mission with which we are so familiar with that of a retreat. Good and helpful as missions are, these retreats for the individual mean something more. The very words suggest the difference. For a "mission" means a sending. God's messenger is sent to us to exhort and to arouse us. We come together for a while each day to hear his instruction and to pray, and then we perforce go home or about our business, so that we are in great danger of growing distracted and even perhaps of forgetting, in other cares, the holy message we have heard. But in a retreat we ourselves retire from the din and bustle of our daily lives to give ourselves entirely, without distraction, to intimate converse with our Creator. We arise from our daily tasks and go apart to God. Not that a retreat is a lonely experience, for there are many together and we profit by companion-

ship and good example. But we keep much to ourselves and very near to God.

It is needless to say that the Holy Father, in common with zealous Churchmen and far-seeing Catholics of every state, has given his earnest and repeated encouragement to so apostolic a work. It is, as he has said (in a letter to the director of one of the European houses of retreats), one of the chief means which he looks to for the fulfilling of his holy purpose "to make all things new in Christ." And on another occasion he declared even more definitely and strongly: "I wish to be the Pope of retreats."

We Catholics of America can not do better, then, than further this earnest wish of the Sovereign Pontiff by the offering of our good works and prayers. Nor need we pause at good desires alone. There are many ways of actively aiding the work. To go one's self to one of the centers already established, or to persuade another to go there and enter upon a retreat; to offer contributions to these centers in aid of the building of houses for this special purpose, to contribute, as is done in Europe, to pay the wages of workingmen

while they are in retreat, to organize bands of retreatants and spread the knowledge of the movement even to those outside the Faith (for a belief in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity is all that is required to make the retreat useful even to a zealous Protestant), these are some of the many ways which open up before the individual's zeal. If one aids the work now in its infancy, he will feel a noble pride when in God's providence houses for retreats are spread throughout the land; like so many fortresses of Christian zeal and virtue, or rather like other cenacles where the Holy Spirit descends to kindle and inflame the hearts of men.

A COMMONPLACE WONDER

Last night I was present at the ending of the three days' retreat of a Young Men's Sodality. A very commonplace occasion. But it was the memory of the circular of a great non-Catholic proselytizing society, read not long before, that cast for us a mystical and tender glory about the ending of that retreat.

The circular had been sadly eloquent of what "they" are doing, and we, it seems, find it so hard to do. There were tales of great gymnasia, and reading rooms in crowded cities, and halls in lonely villages; of railroad libraries and sailors' rests in home and foreign ports. There were lists of lecture courses, and Bible classes; and figures which dealt with brick and stone and money and games and books. And to be sure, the question rose in our mind, as it has in many minds before: Why can not we, with our faith, with our clear vision of the need, with our sorrow for perverse proselytizing, and zeal for conversions to the one true Faith,

why can not we make such boasts as these?

Some hours later I stood in the rear of a Sodality Hall and listened to the closing words of the retreat. There, crowded together on the not luxurious benches, listened a throng of men various in nearly every respect, but they all were Catholics and earnest souls. No social pleasure nor fine equipment, nor sports nor books helped at all to gather them together for these three days of thought and prayer. But they had been coming in just such throngs from office and store, and workshop and factory, to listen to the soberest truths of Faith, Death, Judgment, Hell, and Heaven. And they listened humbly, piously, with honest and reverent eyes.

After this last instruction there was to be an admission of candidates, and a crowd of young men, bright-eyed, vigorous fellows, knelt at the railing and recited a simple Act of Consecration, and were given the medal of the Sodality. What did that mean? That these young men, with the flush of their hot youth in them, and the spell of the world all about them, were joining a society which

aims first and almost exclusively at unearthly things. They were pledging themselves to monthly Communion, with all that means of a steady will and strong pursuit of heavenly-mindedness. They were promising to try and keep their hearts as clean and their lives as innocent as becomes the sworn sons of a stainless Mother, who is crowned Queen of all Virgins, here and in the Heavens.

Then my reverie grew, and I saw in that self-same city other such sodalities, each with the same bright unearthly aim, the same more than natural promises, and the same various membership of energetic, hot-blooded men, exposed every day and hour to the full blast and flame of this world's wickedness. Then I saw sodalities in other cities, other countries, other continents! The strangeness, the superhuman strangeness and beauty of it all dawned slowly upon me, from the commonplace forms and work-a-day surroundings. These men move in a world which sneers at unworldliness, smiles at simple faith and yearns for the sensible and the delightful, for what it can touch and grasp and see. Yet they are not moved to

their hard and pure allegiance to the Queen of Heaven by much present gain or genial fellowship, or bright assembly rooms, or social gatherings. They like all these things and have them, in some measure, and it is very desirable no doubt that they should have them more and more. But the beauty and glory of their fellowship lies just in this: that it is independent of all temporal gain, an unpurchased fealty, a supernatural service—surely a high and holy and a strange phenomenon in this sadducean world.

I lifted my head. The bricks and stones and books and games—good and worthy helps though they are—did not shine quite so brightly now, beside the glory of those many forms bowed at the shrine of Mary. A touch of true unworldliness—this after all is rare and wonderful on the earth!

ONE ASPECT OF OUR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

THOUGH great zeal is being shown here and there the question still remains in general most pertinent: "Why do not we Catholics make more use of the public libraries of our great cities to spread a proper knowledge of the truths of Holy Faith?"

If one thinks a moment, the opportunities they offer seem singular and attractive enough to stir the zeal of the coldest. The shelves of our great libraries are open, generally speaking, to any sort of useful and interesting book, be its theological or philosophic color what it may. Day after day, the keenest, most alert and eager of the city's students come to search the rows of books and the cards of the catalogues for information on all manner of topics—history, science, sociology, letters, art—all the wide range of subjects in which atheism, materialism, and a host of minor 'isms wage war against

Mother Church. While they find the non-Catholic or even the anti-religious side well stated in many bulky volumes, they too often get the Catholic view only in the half-comprehending interpretations of its sternest enemies.

To realize what a great loss this may be to the interests of the Faith, you need only watch the earnestness with which these seekers after information pursue their search. Like a good hound on the scent, you may see such a man following the trail of his subject through all the devious ways of catalogues and shelves. Indifferent to dust and toil, he handles volume after volume, he fingers indices, he hunts through files of ancient magazines, he spares no time or pains to rummage out cross-reference and quotation which may help him to swell his essay or ornament his critique.

Jew, atheist or Christian sage, such a man will read any author duly who treats of his cherished theme, and his mind is often too earnest after fact not to spring easily beyond the pales of bigotry; too thirsty with pursuit not to drink up any honest words which

promise him the pleasant flavor of the truth.

Now, if you could only put before such a man, in such a favorable moment, the very book he needs to help him to a knowledge of that truth; if you could place in his hands a Catholic author, who has well said in his earnest pages just what will enlighten and perhaps persuade, and bring the Catholic doctrine home, would you not think it worth a great deal of painstaking and toil? Yet, the thing is as simple as day. We all have the means constantly, so to speak, at our very elbow—you need only go to the library and recommend the purchase of that book.

The librarian and his corps of assistants will look with greater or less interest on your suggestion, according as they think the book you recommend more or less likely to be useful and welcome to the public they seek to serve. In many cases, if past experience may be relied upon, they will be thankful for the suggestion and take measures to procure the volume and enroll it in the catalogue, cross-referencing it in several ways. And thenceforth, for many years, your patient messenger will stand ready to offer itself to

any inquirer on the subjects with which it deals, appealing to all comers without weariness or reserve, doing good deeds for you long, perhaps, after you have left the world.

Here one might pause to wonder how very few distinctly Catholic books appear among the gifts to our great city libraries. In many of our Catholic homes there are scores of excellent works—honored and disused—which gather dust from year's end to year's end without there being the slightest prospect in their present surroundings of their ever reaching any mortal eye. What an excellent idea it would be to take these volumes to some library which is open to the public, where they would be honorably lodged, catalogued each under its respective subjects, and put in the way of enlightening many minds! We are all coming to realize more and more what a fruitful and noble work of charity it is to give even to a single individual a worthy Catholic book, with its wealth of possibilities for spiritual good. Surely, then, to offer the same precious opportunity to a whole city, to the most interested and most influential minds of a whole

community, is a work of still more admirable zeal.

Nor should we fear unduly any resentment or resistance on the part of the library authorities in this effort of ours to gain a fair representation of Catholic books upon their shelves. For libraries are for the people—and we Catholics often form the majority of readers. Again, libraries are for information, and on what topic is copious and accurate information more essential than on the Catholic Church—the greatest religious fact of all the world.

Viewed in this light, then, the apathetic attitude of many even among our more highly educated Catholics toward this matter of introducing Catholic books is lamentable indeed. Time and time again they come into the libraries seeking information on points of literature, history, science, and what not, which they had far rather gain from some writer in sympathy with their own traditions and beliefs. They, too, like the other eager searchers, run through the catalogues, and hunt the shelves, and find the same elegant profusion of the standard works of free-

thinker, Protestant and Jew, with only here and there some antiquated volume which bears a welcome and familiar Catholic name. And so, to gain the information they wish, they must needs choose out what seems the least objectionable work, and turn over its alien pages in a dissatisfied sort of way, trying to make proper allowance for the author's religious bias, and to pick out the desired grain of information from the mass of mingled error and truth.

Then, sad to say, quite oblivious to the suggestion box or printed suggestion form which is provided for just such cases as this, the disappointed seeker commonly walks forth in some disgust, murmuring, it may be, at the lack of Catholic energy and spirit, but never dreaming of urging his common right as a citizen, and of providing for future Catholic students books that they can trust and use. Surely, our horizon is too improvidently narrow, when, in such a case, we look only to our own, and that, too, our present need. We may wish to consult reliable books on these same topics again—and others surely will.

A word or two might be added here on the special opportunities possessed in this matter by Catholic teachers, especially of the higher classes. They often have occasion to give to their students lists of references, on the matter in hand, on philosophy, or letters, or history, and so on through the list, which are to be called for by the students at the public library. Of course, the report comes back that this book or the other is to be had, but that the rest, and perhaps the ones most valuable as references, are "not in the catalogue."

Now, what could be more natural and proper (and will some one add, in cynical parenthesis "more unusual") than that the said professor should write to the librarian, mentioning the deficiency he has discovered, stating the merit of the work desired, and its usefulness in his own classes, and asking that it be procured? Such a request from such a source would carry double weight.

We have now run over, briefly and in a cursory way, some of the more obvious and easy ways in which Catholic books may be introduced in proper proportion to the read-

ers of the "public libraries" of the land. With even a moderate activity along these lines, how quickly the situation would improve!

Once the book is safely bought and catalogued, one's zeal need not rest there. A word to this one or that who is interested in the subject matter will give the work a present circulation, so that one good deed may bear fruit in many more. This sort of work might well be introduced among the enterprises of Catholic clubs and sodalities. If we were to accustom our children to take interest in such things we would not hear so many complaints, when they grow older, of their indifference toward Catholic literature.

What has been said of books might well be repeated of Catholic papers and magazines. It is quite exasperating, when one considers that we Catholics form so large a part of the population of our American cities, to come into the reading-room of a public library, where there is a whole host of publications of every stamp, and find, perhaps, but a single one of the many excellent Catholic magazines which this country and England

now afford. Here again concerted action on the part of Catholics would readily procure a fair sprinkling at least of Catholic periodicals.

Perhaps at this point some one may be wondering: "But how is one to know of these good Catholic books?" Not a very creditable query surely, considering how well informed many of us are on alien publications, but a very practical one, and therefore to be squarely met. Generally, one might answer: "Take an especial interest in the work of writers of your own faith, glance now and then through the catalogues of Catholic publishers, who are yearly adding some valuable new works, and reprints of older ones, to their lists; speak on the subject with others better informed than yourself, read the reviews of recent books in Catholic magazines, in a word, use all the means one ordinarily tries to gather information about books." Doubtless, when you have finished your search, two things will have impressed you deeply: first, the goodly number of valuable works by Catholic authors that exist, and then your surprising

slowness in not having found them out before.

Now—to close with a somewhat disagreeable admonition—perhaps the most necessary caution in a matter of this kind is that each one should look on the duty of spreading a knowledge of Catholic books as personal to himself, and not pass it on mentally, to other hands. This habit of trusting that every good work of the kind we mention may be somehow done by some one else is, perhaps, the most distressing element of the listless attitude taken by so many Catholics on urgent issues of the day. With such a principle, how is there any hope of spreading duly our precious message of the truth? It is only by each one's doing honestly his little part that the grand sum of noble effort which God so evidently requires of the Catholics of this generation can ever worthily be paid.

The earnest attempts in this line, made here and there by the zealous, may result very well in their own limited field and for a certain time, but it is only when educated Catholics as a whole awaken from their pres-

ent apathy to a sense of individual duty and responsibility, that any great and lasting good will be achieved. Surely, when the forces of evil show such fearless zeal and tireless energy in spreading far and wide their false and dangerous doctrines, he must be a paltry soldier of Christ who will not do even the little that he can to speed to the waiting millions the sacred message of our ancient Faith.

A SUMMER OPPORTUNITY

THE idea came to me in this wise. I was surveying with deep interest from the organ-loft the last exercises of a Children's Mission. Truly it was a touching sight. There were two hundred or more little heads bobbing in the benches, the girls to the left, the boys to the right, for all the world like lively little flowers.

They were demure and interested, too, and when two or three little buds in a secluded spot began to nod rather too violently, I saw one of the older lads put forth an admonitory arm and bring them back to an admired meekness and propriety. Good little lads and lasses! They had come, some of them, many a mile over rough country roads and by-ways; and their attention and sobriety would in the main have done credit to a gathering of their elders. It was plain that they were drawing excellent profit from these precious days of the Children's Retreat.

Such a sight will send one's thoughts traveling, and mine set forth something after

this fashion: "What well-behaved, attentive, dutiful little boys and girls these seem, to be sure! Are not our Catholic country children growing more and more refined and gentle year by year? Surely it is so in general, and those who have to do with our little ones rejoice in the change. The roughness and rudeness which were sometimes so much in evidence in earlier days have lessened notably; our children in the main are measurably more docile, more courteous and responsive than in the not-so-very-long-ago.

"If any one doubts this"—so my meditations continued—"let him contrast, for example, the country Catechism classes of today with those former times. True, even now we have our scapegraces, but on the whole is it not a pleasure rather than a drudgery to teach the little ones their faith? And was it always so?" And just here came a sharp pang of a thought which gave me woe. "But then," said I, "how sad it is that so many of these good little country children have so little opportunity to learn their Catechism as they should!

"For however zealous the parish priest

may be, the children often live miles away, and it is hard to get them all together often enough to make Catechism teaching quite thorough and complete. And again many of our Catholic families dwell in some far-off corner where a priest comes only once or twice a month." And then came the idea!—a happy one, I hope, and surely not too new or strange; which is hinted at in the title words! "A Summer Opportunity."

Many of our good Catholic folk, some men and many women, go a-summering to the homes of these country children or to nearby hotels and cottages. These good Catholic folk are sometimes weary and yawn a little and sigh for occupation. Perhaps they love children, and talk pleasant nothings to them to while away the time. What an opportunity to teach them a bit of Catechism, to gather a pleasant little class together, and win their everlasting gratitude, if not here at least hereafter, by giving them more and more of the precious treasure of the Faith! As a stranger they will give you the warmer welcome, and you may influence them more perhaps than do their elders whom they see

all the year. And if you can do only a little, do not let even a little part of such an opportunity escape you. It is only little in seeming. Who can tell what good one does when he teaches one tiny child one tiny prayer? "For their angels see the face of God," and "whosoever does it to the least of these My little ones does it to Me."

One need not dwell very much on so obvious a train of thought. Look up from the page, dear reader, and let your own reflections wander in this strain. And indeed why should we call this merely a summer opportunity? Whenever any one has leisure and can find a little child, he has an occasion ready to his hand, such as a Guardian Angel might sigh for with desire. There may be lads and lasses near the door of your city dwelling who are as much in need of religious teaching from you as any country child that lives remote among the woods and fields. Alas, the thickets and wildernesses are not the only homes of ignorance! Poor little waifs of the streets, poor little waifs of our city institutions! Will not our zealous Catholic men and women steal the time even

from their busy days to tell you, too, of Jesus and Mary, and to teach your yearning little hearts to love and seek your Father who is in Heaven?

The prudent Shepherd of Christendom has laid an especial emphasis in these latter days on the teaching of Catechism and this most wisely, as we all agree. We are too apt to think of his advice as pointing directly and almost exclusively to the appointed guides and pastors of the Fold. They are the leaders and the principals in the work, to be sure, but any well-instructed Catholic may be their prized and helpful adjutant in a work which truly knows no bounds. It would be a happy thing if every one of us were constantly to see, in the need of our little ones for catechetical teaching, a golden opportunity—for Summer in particular, and then, too, for all the livelong year!

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